



THE INDEPENDENT

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The Queen of gold-rush City

The City of London looked its brash "loadsamoney" self again yesterday, after an unexpected takeover bid by an American bank handed three money managers riches beyond the dreams of avarice. Tom Stevenson watched the new money rolling in.

The streets of London were truly paved with gold yesterday for a former librarian from Newcastle and her colleagues at Britain's biggest pension fund company. They are enjoying the fattest years in the Square Mile since the boom of the 1980s. Carol Galley and two other directors at Mercury Asset Management (MAM) together scooped almost £40m after American banking giant Merrill Lynch bought their company. In doing so, Merrill became the latest in a long line of foreign predators prepared to pay top dollar for a slice of the City's financial expertise.

Ms Galley picked up £10m after the American bank bought her shares and options. This probably makes her the City's richest woman. Her colleague, Stephen Zimmerman, took home £14m, as did Hugh Stevenson, the chairman of MAM. The payouts are certain to stoke the debate about the size of rewards available in the City.

The lottery-style bonanzas followed an unexpected £3bn takeover of MAM, a group that manages more than £100bn of the country's pensions. The swoop came as the City gears itself up for a Christmas bonus round that many believe will be one of the most generous yet.

Although Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, this week publicly criticised the £247,000 salary of the Thames Water chairman, Sir Robert Clarke, there is a growing feeling that far from changing the City's culture of greed, the election has simply hailed in New Labour, same old fat cats.

Although the £10m Ms Galley received for her shares and options was small beer compared to that of some of her colleagues, it came only months

after she hit the headlines with a £5.5m salary and options package. That made the 48-year-old money manager, who shuns the limelight, Britain's best paid woman.

She is certainly Britain's best paid former librarian, having been catapulted into a world that her background as the daughter of a Newcastle council worker hardly prepared her for. Having started work in the library of investment bank SG Warburg in the early 1970s, she now owns houses in the south of France and Belgravia.

The managers of insurance and pension funds, who have traditionally presented the grey face of the City, have recently achieved an unexpected prominence. Ms Galley, famously dubbed the "ice maiden" for the cool manner in which she has dispatched underperforming managers such as Sir Rocco Forte during takeover bids, is one of the most feared women in company boardrooms.

She is one of many expected to benefit from the spiralling rewards on offer in the City this year. When Barclays said last month that it planned to pull out of investment banking, its chief executive blamed the withdrawal in part on the fairy-tale money that has to be paid these days to retain talented staff. Ironically, Barclays then had to guarantee large bonuses to its key staff to prevent them jumping ship before the company could be sold.

The jury remains out on whether the enormous rewards enjoyed by the Square Mile's best-paid individuals is good for the City as a whole, or indeed the country. The takeover of MAM, widely viewed as one of the City's biggest success stories, is the latest in a string of deals which have seen ownership of Britain's financial institutions passing into overseas hands. Establishment names such as Kleinwort Benson, Morgan Grenfell and, most famously, Barings, have been snapped up by foreign buyers in the past two years.

While London remains a leading financial centre thanks to the expertise built up in the City and its geographical position, only a handful of its institutions remain British owned.

Full story, page 23
Outlook, page 25



Striding it rich: Carol Galley, who made £10m when her company was bought by an American firm. The boom times are back in the City, and huge Christmas bonuses expected this year

INSIDE TODAY

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FEATURES



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TODAY'S NEWS

Abuse report is a 'crash course in wickedness'

The Government agreed to set up a ministerial task force to deliver "a safer environment" for the thousands of children in residential care homes following the publication of a scathing 200-page report on child abuse scandals.

Sir William Utting's report said that at times his year-long inquiry had seemed like "a crash course in human wickedness". He made 20 recommendations to eradicate abuse and make it more difficult for paedophiles to prey on children in homes.

The inquiry was set up following revelations in The Independent and Independent on Sunday of abuse in homes in north Wales in the 1980s. Sir William said abuse continued today.

Independent writer wins top award

Jeremy Laurance, our Health Editor, was last night named the Medical Journalist of the Year by the British Medical Association.



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CROSSWORDS Page 32 and the Eye, page 9
WEATHER The Eye, page 10

Web address: <http://www.independent.co.uk>

Choose your parents: former addict mother - or middle-class academics

Appeal judges rejected a middle-class academic couple's hope to adopt the 11-year-old daughter of a former drug addict but gave them care of the girl. The couple insist it's adoption or nothing. Michael Streeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent, says her future is still uncertain.

The young girl had faced an agonising choice - agree to be adopted by a well-off couple who have been helping her, or face being returned, either to her natural mother, who has a history of alcohol and heroin abuse, or to new foster parents.

Now, by joining her mother in rejecting adoption, she may be ending up living with her mother - something described in court as potentially catastrophic for her. The girl is now likely to be taken back into care while a new hearing is arranged to settle her fate.

But the academic couple from Oxford, who have refused to keep the girl unless they can adopt her now also face a very painful choice. Should they relent? One of the judges appealed to them to keep her living with them under a half-way-house agree-

ment. Lord Justice Ward told them he expected that "their hearts will compel them out of love to accept this judgement. I refuse to accept that they are so callous as to turn her out. That would betray the humanity of their actions ..."

The case has highlighted the problems involved in reconciling the wishes of natural parents and children and what might be considered the child's "best interests" with more affluent carers. Although all agreed the girl has prospered under her carers' guidance, both she and her real mother have objected to adoption.

The backgrounds of the carer couple and the child hardly be more different. The pair from Oxford, both doctors of philosophy, were described in court as "living in comfortable circumstances" in the north of the town, with access to good schools.

In contrast the girl, now aged 11, was born to a heroin addict, a woman whose upbringing was described by Lord Justice Ward as "tragic". The mother, who lives on a council estate, was sexually abused at the age of five, married at 16, and in a later relationship conceived the girl while addicted to heroin; the child was born weighing five and a half pounds and suffering from withdrawal symptoms.

At the age of seven the girl, who cannot be identified for legal reasons, had to call the emergency services after finding her mother's current partner dead from a drugs overdose - her mother was too intoxicated to help.

Against this backdrop of vivid contrasts, the Court of Appeal yesterday had to decide whether to back a county court judge's decision to allow the academic couple to adopt the girl, who had done well at school since she joined them in December 1994 aged eight.

In a case one of the judges described as "painfully difficult", they were faced with advice on one side that to be returned to her natural mother, especially without a long period of rehabilitation, could be "catastrophic" for the girl though they remain close.

On the other the academic couple, whose care had made a marked improvement in the girl's education, insisted - in theirs and the child's interests - on the certainty of adoption or nothing. Although never promised they could adopt, they had been led to believe it was likely and had married last year to qualify.

By a split two-to-one verdict, the judges rejected adoption but instead recommended a separate option, a residence order allowing the girl to remain

with them.

Giving the majority judgement, Lord Justice Ward said he sympathised with the carers' dilemma, and said that their admitted "element of selfishness" in their stance was understandable. But, hoping the couple might change their mind, he said if they rejected the girl it could cause "untold harm to her emotional development".

Lord Justice Judge said the couple had faced the real mother with a stark choice, and some might wonder whether they were not putting their own interests ahead of what might be thought best for the girl. No one doubted that the best interests of the child, who came from a "deprived and disturbed background", lay in staying with an "intelligent and thoughtful couple ... and a happy and settled home".

After the judgement the carers' barrister, Fiona Hay, said the residence order "remains unacceptable" to the couple, and called on the local authority to start a rehabilitation plan for the mother and child. The couple, who refused to comment after the hearing, are believed to want the matter dealt with inside three months. The judges agreed there should be a High Court hearing "of some urgency".

Full story, page 3

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COLUMN ONE

Lost your way? Just follow that bird

A famous New Yorker cartoon shows a policeman explaining to a tourist how to find some famous location. The policeman's speech is shown as a bubble containing a precise map of left and right turns, landmarks and destination.

The listening tourist has a thought bubble which also contains a map - but it is a terrible, confused thing where the policeman's solid directions have become a wandering squiggle.

That's the trouble with trying to tell people how to find things: they have to have the same map in their head that we do, or else you're wasting your breath. And describing a picture in your head is one of life's hardest tasks: "It's past the blue pub - well, it looks blue when the yellow streetlight's on, though really it's sort of green..."

When a place or system (such as a computer) is familiar to you, scientists say you have a "cognitive map" of it: you know how to get from A to B. (Of course, when a computer is new to you, you do not have a cognitive map for how it works - hence helpfiles.)

We feel confident that we can hold cognitive maps in our head because we're conscious, sentient beings. But how do other animals which find things do it? How do squirrels find nuts they've buried for their essential winter stores, and how do birds that bury seeds (as some do) locate them when they fly back into the area?

It turns out that these lower animals also use cognitive maps - a fact established by a pair of scientists at the University of Nebraska who experimented with birds called the corvid. Clark's nutcracker. Their work is published today in the science journal *Nature*.

In the ungenerous way that scientists have, Alan Kamil and Juli Jones kept the birds hungry and then put them into an observation room with posters on the walls, and a door, porthole and smoked-glass window on the east wall. There were also north and south landmarks, with a seed buried halfway between them; the birds entered the room each time via the eastern porthole. The birds got used to finding the seed, even when it was well buried.

Then the scientists started moving the landmarks around. Which did not trouble the birds: they simply looked for the landmarks, found the halfway point, and dug for the seed there.

So the experimenters started playing nasty tricks on these tourist-like birds, and began shifting the north-south landmarks away from their north-south orientation relative to the porthole. The birds still headed for the halfway mark. The height of the landmarks was changed. No problem for the birds. The seeds were removed altogether (in case the birds were cheating by smelling them). Still, the birds hit the mark.

Eventually, the duo had to admit that the birds could do it: they could build a cognitive map. Or, as the paper puts it, "nutcrackers can learn to find a spatial position defined by an abstract geometric relationship".

Quite where this leaves the human race is an entirely separate matter. If birds can fly halfway around the world and then return to the same spot by holding a map inside their (comparatively) rudimentary brains, what does that say about us, struggling to follow the directions of New York policemen and the entreaties of computer helpline operators? Perhaps what we really need is not to be so clever, but a little more bird-brained in our approach to the world. It's a solution that could work wonders - as long as nobody moves the goalposts while we're not looking.

— Charles Arthur, Science Editor

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PEOPLE



Gary Glitter questioned over child pornography

Pop star Gary Glitter (above) was yesterday at the centre of a child pornography inquiry after images were allegedly discovered stored on a computer he took for repair.

Glitter - whose real name is Paul Gadd - was arrested by police after staff in a computer store allegedly found indecent pictures as they tried to repair a fault. Officers later searched the star's home in Wedmore, Somerset, and his London flat and seized a quantity of videos and indecent pictures of children.

Glitter, 53, was questioned by detectives in Bristol on Tuesday before being released on police bail while further inquiries were made. He has not been charged with any offence. Glitter's spokesman said yesterday: "He has been released without charge. He is not available for comment."

Seventies legend Glitter, who still plays to sell-out crowds of fans across Britain, is due to be in-

terviewed by detectives again in the New Year. An Avon and Somerset Police spokesman said today: "I can confirm that a 53-year-old man was arrested and a computer was seized. I can also confirm that we have searched an address in London and videos and numerous indecent photographs of children have been seized."

Gary Glitter last night denied committing any offence. He said his 10-date Christmas British tour would go ahead as planned and his new album will be released on Monday. The tour is due to start in Cardiff on 9 December and ends in Manchester on 21 December.

Glitter, a father of two, has sold 18 million records during his career, which has included hits such as "I'm The Leader of the Gang (I Am)". He has managed to beat off drink and drug problems which drove him to two suicide attempts and still tours the country every Christmas.

'Starlight' skater sues for fall

A top dancer in the roller-skating musical *Starlight Express* was yesterday as she told the High Court in London how an accident on stage ended her career.

Caron Davis said that she was introducing her character, Dinah, to the audience at a show in March 1994, when the toe-stop on her right skate failed to brake and her legs flew up in the air before she ended up on her back.

"I was in shock but I carried on singing," she told Judge Christopher Horden QC. "I was so embarrassed because I never fall over. I was one of the strongest skaters in the show, but I couldn't do anything to keep my balance. The adrenalin was still pumping, the muscles still warm, and I carried on with the show."

Ms Davis, 31, of Ruislip, west London, described how damage to ligaments in her lower back meant she had to retrain as a reflexologist. "I miss my career as a dancer - this is what I've been doing since I was three," she said.

Ms Davis, whose stage name

was Caron Cardelle, is suing the Really Useful Theatre Company Ltd, which manages the Andrew Lloyd-Webber musical at the Apollo Victoria theatre, claiming it was negligent in not doing more to keep the stage clean.

The company denies liability and claims the accident was caused by her own lack of attention or lack of skill.

Ms Davis told the court that after her fall she discovered blood on her toe-stop which, she said, was either blown on to the stage by the air-conditioning or came from new carpet in the front of house.

Her counsel, Howard Lederman, said the show in which she was injured was briefly stopped shortly afterwards for the stage to be swept and treated with a special cleaner. The stage manager's report for the performance showed that various cast members complained that the stage was slippery. A report from another performance four months later said it was like an "ice-rink". The case continues.

Schoolboy flees to Caribbean

A 16-year-old schoolboy from one of the country's top public schools has run away to the Caribbean to escape "exam stress", it emerged yesterday. Fern Chapman disappeared from Rugby School, Warwickshire, and boarded an aircraft heading for Barbados at Manchester Airport on Tuesday morning.

The teenager, who is believed to be suffering from exam stress, is known to have landed on the island, but has not been seen since.

Warwickshire police alerted Interpol after the boy was reported missing by the school. A spokesman for Warwickshire police said the teenager, whose parents live in North Yorkshire, had recently spent a family holiday on the island and was familiar with the area.

"We believe he has friends and contacts on the island, but obviously the police, Interpol, his school and his parents are very concerned for his welfare," a police spokeswoman said.

UPDATE

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

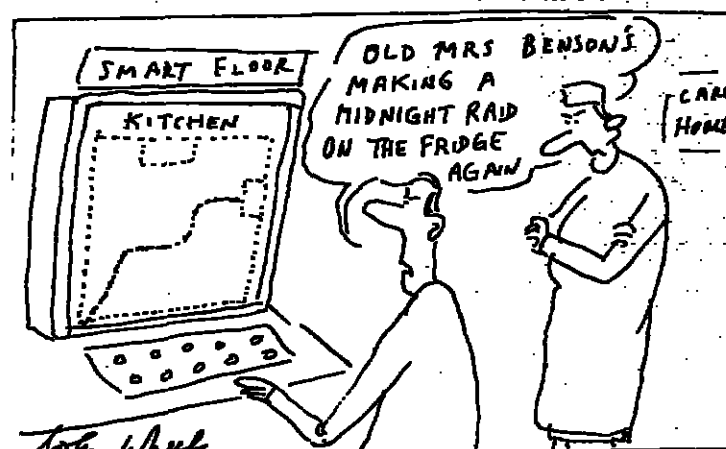
Children tug at purse-strings

Children may not hold the purse strings of the family budget, but they influence more than £31bn worth of consumer spending each year, and their influence is not confined to toys and games. They also wield £6.27bn worth of power over house purchases, £1.64bn over car choices, and £1.56bn over computer buys, research by Saatchi & Saatchi has found.

However, the agency says the area where children under-15 have the most financial clout is over the dinner table. When it comes to day-to-day meals, children's likes and dislikes influence what is served up to the value of £12.96bn. When mothers were asked whether they took their children's views into account, 75% of mothers said children had most influence over lower cost items like toys and breakfast cereal purchases. But 22 per cent said they would also take their children's views into account in moving house. In the area of children's clothes, their power is worth £1.87bn.

TECHNOLOGY

'Smart' floor warns of danger



A "smart" floor has been developed that can recognise if someone is walking on it and even check their breathing and pulse if they fall. The polypropylene flooring material is expected to help ensure the safety of frail or confused people, such as the elderly or mentally ill. The material has a pressure-sensitive film full of bubbles that register an electric charge whenever they are vibrated. The film can be laid into concrete and covered with anything from linoleum to ceramic tiles, and if a person wanders around in the middle of the night a warning signal is sent out. The film is produced by the Finnish company Messet, which claims it will cost less than £20 per square metre, a report in *New Scientist* magazine says. Trials of the flooring are taking place in private nursing homes in Finland.

GENDER STUDIES

Baby boys stick together

Male babies can tell what little boys and girls are made of even at three months, scientists report in *New Scientist*. They said boys of that age appear able to detect the difference between male and female infants - and prefer other boys. Researchers at Durham University tested the gender preference of 60 three-month-old infants by showing them photographs of male and female babies wearing clothes. They noted which the infants looked at first and how long they spent looking at babies of their own sex. Pictures of trucks, dolls, and five-year-old children of either sex sparked little interest. But the boys showed a marked increase in curiosity when shown pictures of other male infants. Three-month-old girls showed no preference.

Big George Webley

In Tuesday's *The Eye*, the theme music for *Have I Got News For You* was incorrectly attributed. The programme's theme was written by Big George Webley.

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.36	Italy (lira)	2,797
Austria (schillings)	19.97	Japan (yen)	212.56
Belgium (francs)	58.70	Malta (lira)	0.62
Canada (\$)	2.33	Netherlands (guilders)	3.20
Cyprus (pounds)	0.83	Norway (kroner)	11.64
Denmark (kroner)	10.89	Portugal (escudos)	288.46
France (francs)	9.50	Spain (pesetas)	238.92
Germany (marks)	2.84	Sweden (kroner)	12.54
Greece (drachmel)	449.35	Switzerland (francs)	2.31
Hong Kong (\$)	12.70	Turkey (lira)	306,733
Ireland (punts)	1.08	USA (\$)	1.65

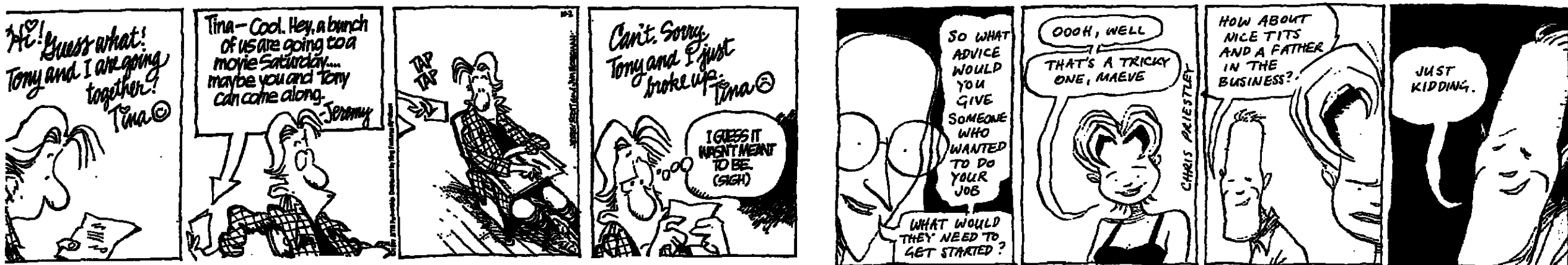
Sources: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

ZITS

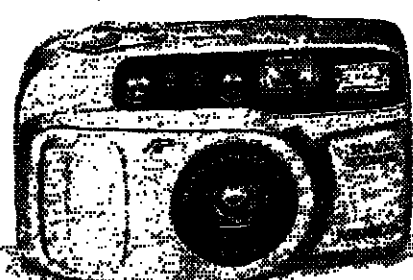
by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

7.30 FOR 8

by Chris Priestley

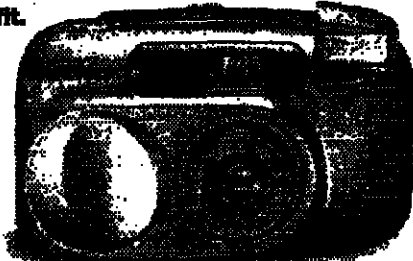


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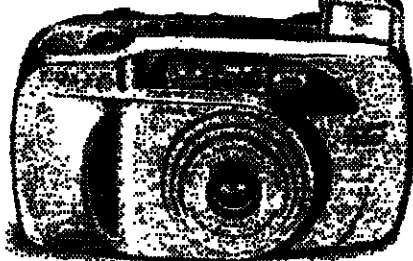
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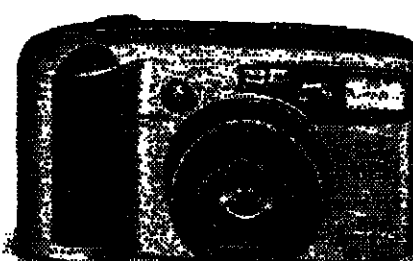
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3/LEADING STORIES

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT

Film, theatre, rock, pop, jazz and classical music. In the 32-page Eye



Teenage Fanclub: on the road with Radiohead
THE EYE



Francesca Annis: living with notoriety ... and Ralph Fiennes
THE EYE

Judge overrules parents' wish for dying baby

A High Court judge gave doctors the go-ahead for a course of action which could allow a fatally ill baby to die, despite objections from her parents. Michael Streeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent, looks at the tragic case.

Baby "C" can smile and recognise her mother and father. Her loving parents, who are deeply religious orthodox Jews, cannot bring themselves to face the "inevitable" future of their child, who is suffering a muscle-wasting condition.

In his judgment yesterday, Family Division President Sir Stephen Brown said: "They visit her and see a reaction which is favourable in her face towards them. They do not believe it is within their religious tenets to contemplate the possibility of indirectly shortening life, even if that is not the purpose of the course which the doctors believe to be appropriate in order to spare her further suffering."

The treatment proposed by hospital doctors, including withdrawal of artificial ventilation and non-resuscitation if she then stopped breathing, was "in the best interests of the child". He said it would also include "palliative care to ease the suffering of this little girl to allow her life to end peacefully and with dignity".

The parents had agreed that she should be taken off ventilation in a last attempt to see whether she might survive for a time, but they wanted to be assured that ventilation would be resumed if she suffered respiratory relapse - a course of action doctors could not accept.

The judge agreed with the treatment proposed by the hospital trust responsible for treating the baby, which had the support of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. However, he gave consent "with a feeling of grave solemnity ... It is a sad feature that there is, in fact, no hope for C, and what has to be considered is her best interests to prevent her from suffering, as would be inevitable if this course were not to be taken."

The fatal disease, spinal muscular atrophy type 1, had reduced Baby C's weight from 7.5 kg last March to only 5.5kg. Doctors say she is in a "no chance" situation in which life-sustaining treatment simply delayed death without significant alleviation of suffering. Indefinite ventilation would increase distress and involve a tracheotomy under anaesthetic, which might give rise to epilepsy.

The judge praised the bravery of the girl's parents who were doing their best to support their "treasured" daughter. He referred to a statement in which the mother said they had the highest regard for the doctors, but "we are still of the opinion that the course of action proposed would not be in the best interests of our child. Religion plays an important part in the life of myself and my family". A fundamental principle was that faith could not stand aside and watch a person die where their intervention could prevent that death. "In such a case, the person that stands by will subsequently be punished by God. Failing to resuscitate is equivalent to a situation such as this," she said.

The judge said that to accede to the parents' wishes would be tantamount to requiring the doctors to undertake a course of treatment which they were unwilling to do. "Their objective in their profession is to save and preserve life but ... while the sanctity of life is vitally important, it is not the paramount consideration. The paramount consideration here is the best interests of little C."

The Royal College recently published a report identifying situations when it may be right to stop active treatment, including "no chance" cases when treatment may delay death without easing suffering. The college's President Professor David Baum said: "The college upholds fundamental principles; children's welfare is paramount, doctors have a duty always to comfort, cherish and prevent pain and suffering." The British Medical Association said such cases were "quite common" and it was down to the judgement of medical professionals on what the best course of treatment should be.



Class differences: Peter and Jo Rado, who have adopted four children, at their home in Reading, Berkshire, yesterday

Photograph: John Lawrence

Crossing the class barrier to create a happy family

Peter and Jo Rado, an academic middle-class couple from Reading, have four adopted children. Jason, now 22 years old, was the second child to join them. He was nine years old and from a poor working-class background. Here, Mrs Rado tells Kate Hipem about the difficulties of crossing between classes during the adoption process.

"When Jason came to us, all he wanted for dinner was pie and mash in front on the television. He found it very hard that we expected him to sit at the table with a knife and fork and make family conversation. Things like that may be trivial battles for many families but, for us, they highlighted so clearly the difficulties of Jason having to adapt from one class of family to another.

... He did not really know where he belonged. Although we made a conscious effort

not to try and change his South London accent to sound more like ours, there were times when we picked him up on pronouncing his ts, and I think he was resentful ... In fact, he still feels he has to be a chameleon. Just as he changed his speech and behaviour according to whether he was attending state school and fee-paying school, he admits that even now he speaks more precisely when he is with our extended family. As a result, he does not feel as relaxed as he could do.

"In fact, we took him out of the state-school system because he didn't seem to fit in but he faced the same problems at private school. When you're adopted, feeling that you belong is so important and when you don't have a clear idea of where you fit, this can loom considerably. And being academics meant that both of us could be around in the daytime and so either of us could pick him up from school. Whilst that seems nothing but positive on the surface, it seemed to make him feel that he stood out even more.

"Before Jason joined our family, he had been used to funfairs, loud music and wall-to-wall television. It was a huge shock to him to find that our family interests were museums, visiting National Trust properties and having holidays abroad. He went along with it until he was around 14 and able to vote with his feet - which he certainly did. I can remember endless difficult outings when he was a very unwilling participant. Hobbies can be so class-orientated and we never realised the complications that can cause.

"Then there were the music lessons, which we felt were so important as a result of our love of classical music. We paid for Jason to have cello lessons, because it was clear he had a musical ability which was not being tapped into. But again, it was an activity that was alien to him ... we hoped he would enjoy music, art and reading but he resisted it all. Whilst he can look back in hindsight and wish he had made more of it, it was understandably difficult for him to adjust.

"The last summer Jason spent with his nat-

ural family was disastrous for him and he is now grateful that he did not stay with them, despite the fact that he has been in touch with his birth mother recently. And whilst we feel Jason's life has been richer and fuller than it could have been with the problems that his natural family were suffering, we never forgot that was his home at one stage ...

"One thing Jason used to comment on throughout his upbringing was the amount of money we gave to charity. It was as if he felt that money should have been spent on him, now that he was getting used to a more affluent life, and that he was missing out as a result. We buy many clothes from charity shops and he would often be resentful. Now, Jason says he considers himself somewhere in the middle of both types of family. Upper working class is the expression he uses. And despite all the problems and uncertainties he has had to face as a result of cross-class adoption, he does stress that he now feels he has the rare opportunity of having a deeper insight into both worlds ..."

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**"33"
EXPORT**

**LA PETITE BIÈRE
BLONDE CÉLÈBRE**

Child-abuse report reveals 'crash course in wickedness'

The stark, bleak life facing many children in residential care in England and Wales is laid bare in the Sir William Utting's report on child abuse, published yesterday. Our correspondent says the tragedy of poor education and health, high rates of mental illness, bullying and intimidation, is only capped by the threat of 'sexual terrorists', men who still haunt the care system preying on young, vulnerable victims.

Sir William said his inquiry "seemed at times a crash course in human... wickedness and the fallibility of social institutions". The inquiry was set up last summer as a result of continuing revelations of widespread abuse in children's homes, stretching back as far as 20 years. Although there are now significantly fewer children in homes - 8,000 in 1995

BY ROGER DOBSON

compared to 40,000 in 1975 - "the danger of child abuse remains an ever present threat".

As a result, Sir William urged a radical overhaul of the system to protect children living away from home, including a comprehensive strategy for residential child care, legislation to regulate private foster care, legal protection against abuse, incorporating tougher standards on the recruitment of staff, and securing enough care for there to be a choice of placements.

"[These children] must take their place among other priorities for increased public expenditure... The ultimate cost to society of not doing these things will be many times greater through the burden of ruined adult lives," said Sir William.

"There are no grounds for complacence

cy about either children's homes or the other settings in which children live away from home. Abuse is documented in them all. People who wish to exploit children seek occupations or voluntary work where they have access to children.

"They will find the weak points in our defences. Institutions may be corrupted by evil people, or decay internally through neglecting their primary purpose of serving the interests of children... There is still too much abuse on a mundane level - casual or opportunistic, physical, sexual and emotional."

The report, *People Like Us*, says there needs to be a rethink on the current strategy of residential care. He says that councils now spend less on residential care than they did 10 years ago. "We feel that residential child care as a national service has shrunk to below that which provides a reasonable choice for children."

Research had shown that 75 per cent of children leaving care have no academic qualifications of any kind.

More than half of them are unemployed, and 38 per cent of young prisoners have

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Government to develop a comprehensive strategy of residential child care.
- Councils to get sufficient accommodation for children in care.
- Councils to focus on educational and health needs of children in care.
- Government to produce a code of practice for recruiting, selecting and training foster carers.
- Government to make unregistered foster care a criminal offence.
- Government to carry out review of current arrangements for prosecuting sexual offences against children.
- Children's homes with three and fewer beds to be regulated.

been in care. One in seven girls was also pregnant on leaving care aged 16 or 17.

On welfare of children in care the report says it received evidence of high rates of ill health. "Professor Jo Siebert told us that children looked after by local authorities were the most deprived group of children he had met, with serious health needs requiring expert attention from community paediatricians and psychiatrists."

"A submission to us estimated that 75 per cent had mental health problems, some complex and severe, and some with undiagnosed psychoses."

On paedophiles in the care system, he says: "Becoming associated with residential work as an employee or volunteer provides the abuser with a captive group of vulnerable children. Abusers may be good at their jobs, winning respect, affection or fear from their colleagues and admiration

from the parents whose children they corrupt."

The report goes on: "Persistent sexual abusers are a scourge of childhood. Each one who adopts the lifetime career of abusing children sexually will amass a library of hundreds of victims. All of these will be damaged, many will be caused unspeakable psychological and physical harm."

"People who prey upon children in this way are sexual terrorists."

On staffing in the care system the report says that at the last count only 29 per cent of care staff had any social work qualification.

Although the report mainly refers to male abusers, it says there is increasing recognition that women too may abuse sexually and physically.

"It is important that foster care officers and social workers are aware of this and remain on their guard... Allegations from children should be dealt with thoroughly rather than assuming that 'women do not do things like that'."

Sir William spent nearly a year producing the detailed 200-page report.

Minister to lead taskforce

Residential care for children has been "a woeful tale of failure at all levels", Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, said in response to the Utting report. A ministerial taskforce will be set up to deliver a "safer environment" for children.

Responding in the Commons to the report, Mr Dobson said that he would be leading a ministerial task force, involving ministers and expert advisers to put forward "a full programme of policy and management changes to deliver the safer environment that children living away from home are entitled to".

The Government was already committed to the creation of a statutory General Social Care Council to regulate standards of conduct and practice, he added. Paying tribute to "the many dedicated people" caring for children, he said: "We owe it to them and to the children they look after to root out and punish the wrongdoers and also to put into place a system which helps rather than hinders their efforts."

The National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children welcomed the report, but said it was imperative that the Government ensured its recommendations were put into action within a short given time scale.

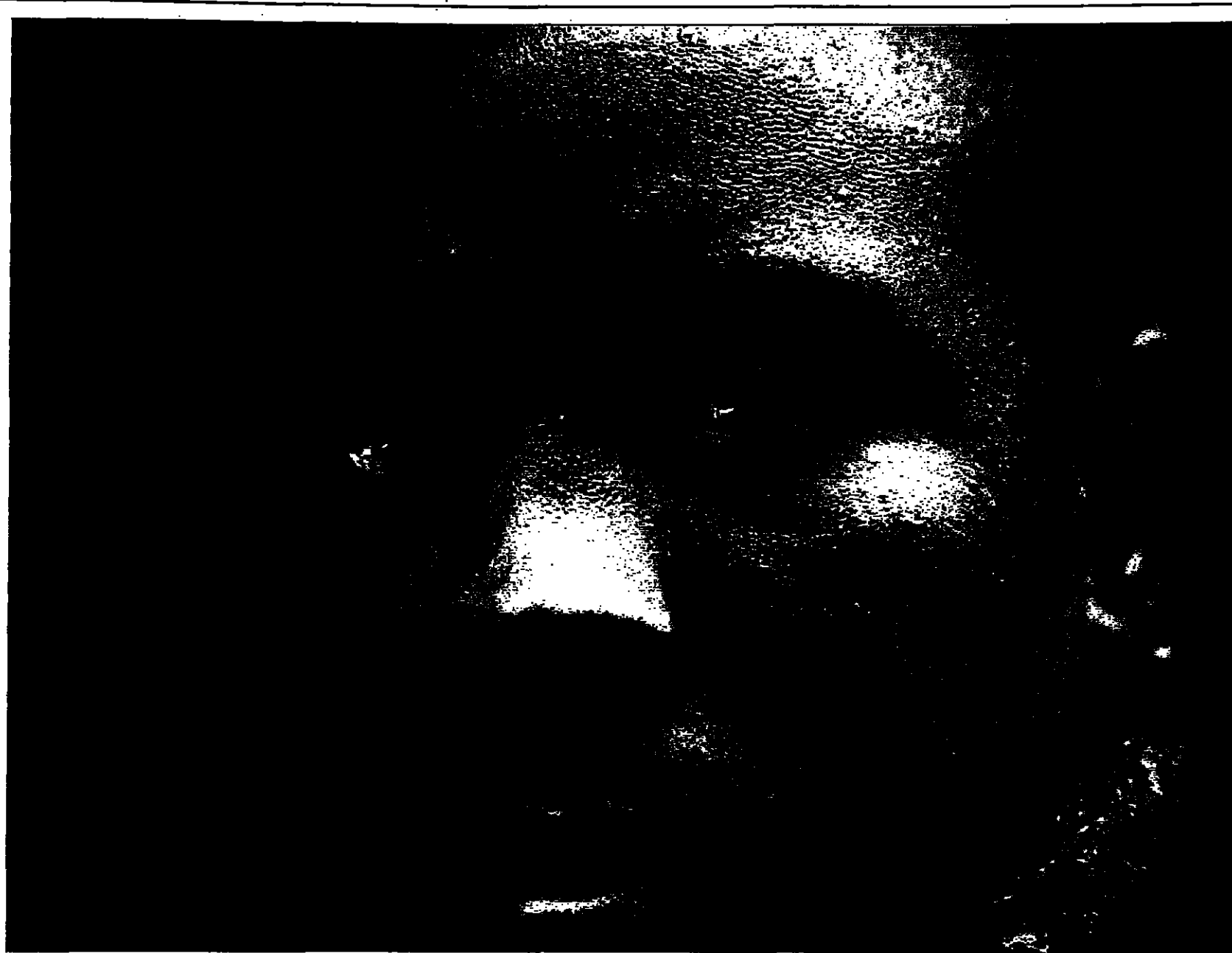
Mike Taylor, NSPCC director of children's services, said: "We must ensure that, whether in private boarding schools, hospitals, youth custody or in local authority residential homes or foster care, each and every child is offered the same proper level of protection."

Roy Taylor, president of the Association of Directors of Social Services, said care had improved substantially compared with 20 years ago. "Now 80 per cent of heads of children's homes are professionally qualified and there are independent inspections of children's homes," he said. "However, because we have had to make cuts in recent years, even though the quality of care has gone up in the services which are being provided, there is not enough choice."

● A report into state-run children's homes in Scotland which care for 10,000 children was also published yesterday to run parallel to the Utting report.

Former social work director Roger Kent said his "Children's Safeguards Review" followed "major and widely reported episodes of abuse" in recent years and recommended better recruitment, raising the status and professionalism of the carer service and better information and reporting of incidents as culture that does not tolerate abusive behaviour.

— Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent



Ruined life: Tobias Taitt, who turned to crime while living in a children's home

Photograph: Brian Harris

Former resident tells of a stolen childhood

Tobias Taitt believes his childhood taken from him. In children's homes from the age of three, he says that he suffered harsh regimes that no child should have to endure. His tale is not the worst of the abuse cases to emerge in recent years. He was not raped or repeatedly sexually abused.

But the story he told as he met solicitors and social services yesterday, reveals how physical abuse, too, can wreck lives.

Mr Taitt, now 30, blames the "draconian punishments" at his children's home for the fact he ran away at 14, notched up his first crimes - burgling newsagents - while spending two weeks

on the run, and began a spiral of decline which landed him addicted to crack cocaine and in jail for assaulting a policeman by the age of 19.

Although unhappy in previous homes, the main problem began when he was sent to a residential special school aged about 13. It was, he claims, run by former Army and Navy men who brought the tough forces regime to the children's home.

"They would have you scrubbing floors. If you talked at night, you had to do bed pack [folding all your bedding up] and stand with it, or go out and run around the field," Mr Taitt claims.

The worst punishment was being held in solitary confinement, first for a week, then for 10 days and finally for three weeks. "Can you imagine what that did to a child of 13/14? I was just in a state. Nobody was allowed to talk to me."

He claims he begged his social worker to take him away, but was told there were no other places available. "I think it was criminal," he says.

Now a convert to Islam, married and with two young children, Mr Taitt, of west London, wants to make something of his life. "I have certain responsibilities to rehabilitate myself. But someone needs to hold their hands up and acknowledge what

happened," he says. "I feel as if they have ruined my life. The reality is I've got no qualifications and the only job I can do is something like carrying bricks. It's not the work for a man with a brain in his head."

About five years ago, he re-visited his old home and saw surviving members of staff who told him how it had changed. They told, too, what had happened to his fellow pupils - in jail for murder, manslaughter and drug-running. "It was tragedy after tragedy after tragedy," Mr Taitt says. "Nobody came out of that place any good. It was a hell-hole."

— Louise Jury

Thousands on care blacklist

Nearly 5,000 care workers and former care workers are on a government black list, it is revealed in the report. The 4,800 names on the list have all been referred by the police and all have received either convictions or police cautions.

There are another 750 names on the so-called "consultancy index", also run by the Department of Health. Names here are provided by employers and are considered to be unsuitable for work with children.

The figures give an insight into the scale of the abuse problem not found elsewhere. Although there have been various estimates of up to 110,000 paedophiles in Britain, the number operating within the care system remains unknown.

There are thought to be around 18 police investigations currently underway in Britain, and there have been a number of high profile prosecutions in Leicestershire, North Wales, Cheshire, Merseyside and London.

But successfully prosecuting alleged abusers is difficult. In North Wales, for example, police interviewed 2,500 people, which produced 500 complaints of abuse, but only eight people were prosecuted and of them six were convicted.

The Utting Report recommends that there should be a ban on the export of child pornography as well as its import. It estimates that in the US alone the market is worth £2bn a year. "It is claimed that producers have filmed one million children in America. In the UK the market is clearly considerable, in the first nine months of 1994 the Metropolitan Police seized 7,200 child pornography tapes, a 50 per cent increase on what was seized during the whole of 1993," the report says.

One of the problems in successfully prosecuting abusers is the reliance on children giving evidence. The report says there should be flexibility in allowing evidence in a form best suited to the age of the child. It says that one in three children who report sexual abuse are under eight, but that prosecutions are extremely rare in this age group. "It is not acceptable that criminal justice should fail the weakest in society in this way."

Home Office figures confirmed the decline in the number of successful prosecutions for sexual offences against children. Recorded offences of unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13 went down from 299 in 1985 to 178 in 1995.

The report says that the conviction rate for gross indecency with children under 14 is just 12 per cent.

— Roger Dobson

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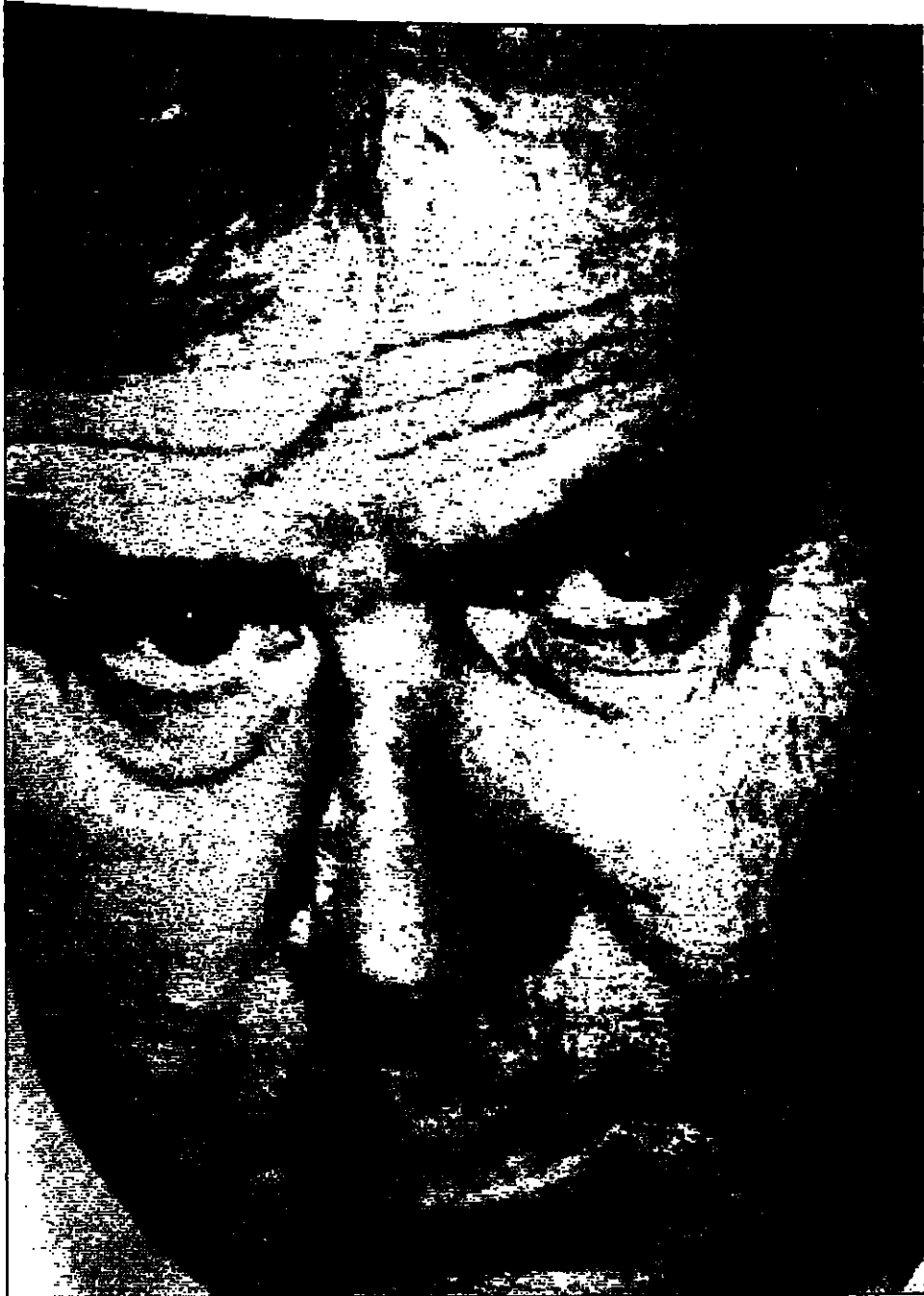
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5/LEADING STORIES

Is this the man to blame for the Iraq fiasco?



Shooting from the hip: Richard Butler, Unscm's bluff Australian chairman, whose confrontational style has got him in trouble with the UN as well as Baghdad

Richard Butler is a man proud of what he calls his 'Australianisms', turns of phrase that in their bluntness eschew the diplo-speak of those around him. But, as David Osborne explains, the word in New York is that the UN official in charge of weapons inspections in Iraq has gone too far.

No one can say it out loud, but Richard Butler, the bluff Australian who on 1 July took over as the chief of Unscm, the UN Special Committee responsible for ridding Iraq of all weapons of mass destruction, is in trouble. He is in trouble with Baghdad, of course. But, more gravely, he is also in trouble in New York. The criticism, voiced privately in the corridors of UN headquarters, is this: in his handling of the crisis that has put the United States on the brink of military action in the Gulf, Mr Butler has failed utterly to lower the temperature. Indeed, by refusing to moderate his confrontational style, he has provoked and offended almost everyone involved.

"The feeling now is unanimous that Butler has lost it basically, he has lost it," commented one well-placed diplomatic source here. "He shoots from the hip and it is just not helpful at a time like this."

Some of the grumbling gets personal. His detractors accuse him variously of racism and of siding with Washington against Baghdad to the extent that the

UN's credibility in the Middle East is imperilled. More vicious still are the persistent rumours of excessive alcohol consumption. "I've given all that up," Mr Butler asserted at the time to a Sydney newspaper.

Even the Americans are known to be uneasy now with Mr Butler's performance. Mostly, it has been others in the Security Council more sympathetic toward Baghdad than Washington or London, who have allowed their impatience with him to show. China and Russia were livid when Mr Butler responded to the ejection by Saddam Hussein of US members of his inspection team in Iraq by pulling out all of the other inspectors. Their irritation was mainly because the Council was not informed until Mr Butler had announced it to the press.

While Mr Butler's competence has been raised in the Security Council, it has happened only behind closed doors. A clear hint of dissatisfaction came with

a statement issued late last Thursday condemning Baghdad's actions. A draft said the Council "expresses its full support for the Special Commission under its executive chairman (Butler)". In its final form, however, all reference to the chairman had vanished.

At first glimpse, Mr Butler, 55, had seemed the perfect fit when the former chairman of Unscm, Rolf Ekus, a soft-spoken Swede, announced at the start of the year that he would be stepping down. The Australian's no-nonsense style was considered by the British (although the Americans had reservations from the start) as ideally suited to the task of holding Iraq to the conditions of the Gulf War ceasefire: that it rid itself of all weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and show itself to have done so.

He also had impeccable credentials in weapons control. For many years Mr Butler was Australia's representative to

the disarmament talks in Vienna. Last year, he was widely praised for essentially saving the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by pushing it through the UN General Assembly against Indian opposition.

Nor should the trickiness of the job be taken on by underestimated. The work of the Unscm chairman, whoever it might be, is constantly undermined by the fractures that exist in the Security Council, with the US and Britain drifting ever further from the rest.

Part of what hurts him now is the contrast between his style and that of Mr Ekus. It is well known that when Iraq is obliged periodically to submit statements to the UN on the progress it is making towards disarming, Mr Ekus would assist it in drafting them. Mr Butler, by contrast, has refused, taking whatever statements Baghdad gives him and denouncing them without pause.

He has hurt himself with his own frankness, or, as he told the *New York Times*, with his predilection for "plain Australianisms to express my incredulity about things". In the same interview, he gave voice to his suspicion that "truth in some cultures is kind of what you can get away with saying". The remark was taken by many Arab observers, and governments, as racist. The Secretariat was bombarded by letters of complaint from the Middle East region and they are still pouring in. Whatever the rumblings, Richard Butler's position still looks secure. He was appointed by the Security Council and any attempt to remove him would only be portrayed as a concession to Saddam Hussein.



Fog of war: Middle East relations could be clouded by the Butler affair

FOREIGN MINISTERS SEEK SOLUTION IN GENEVA

Foreign ministers from Britain, France, Russia and the United States met in Geneva last night to discuss a Russian proposal to resolve the crisis over Iraq's expulsion of American UN weapons inspectors and avoid American military action.

Yevgeny Primakov, the Russian foreign minister, said he expected "a lot" to come out of the meeting, following talks with Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi deputy prime minister in Moscow on Tuesday.

Madeline Albright, the US Secretary of State, cut short a visit to India to attend the talks.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and his French counterpart, Hubert Verdrine, were scheduled to hold bi-lateral talks before the meeting at the United Nations European Headquarters. Ms Al-

bright's spokesman, James Rubin, had said yesterday that it would not be clear if the decision to hold the meeting meant an agreement was near until "we arrive in Geneva and we have a chance to study what Foreign Minister Primakov brought with him."

But diplomatic sources said it was likely that a significant degree of consultation would have already taken place before the meeting. President Bill Clinton had threatened military action against Iraq, announcing earlier this week that he was sending additional combat aircraft, including six B-52 bombers, to the Gulf. But the US has failed to gain international support for military action and is under pressure to find a diplomatic solution.

The military action was in

response to the expulsion of six American members of the UN weapons inspection team last week, which effectively suspended the UN Special Commission on weapons inspection (Unscm), set up after the end of the Gulf War in 1991. Russia accepts Iraq acted unlawfully in restricting the UN weapons inspectors' access, but opposes military action, saying that Iraq should be given incentives in return for implementing UN resolutions.

On Monday, the US said that Iraq could be allowed to increase its oil sales to buy humanitarian goods. Iraq's UN ambassador, Nizar Hamdoun, dismissed this as a "non-starter" because it did not address Iraq's aim of having sanctions lifted entirely.

— Harriet Martin, Geneva

New Labour puts its spin on government information

The Government has drawn up new guidelines for its press officers. Some ministers are unhappy about the way their policies are being portrayed. Michael Streeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent, has had an early glimpse of the rules and considers the likely reaction.

For the eight senior government information officers who have left since Labour took power, some of the new advice may be greeted with a hollow laugh.

"Working with ministers is often fun and exciting and invariably generates considerable motivation and involvement," says the first draft of the guidelines, leaked to *The Independent*.

However, the same advice drawn up by the head of the Government Information Service, Mike Granatt, but with the unmistakable imprint of the Prime Minister's chief press secretary Alastair Campbell on every page - will not make easy reading for politicians either.

"Ministers sometimes find it difficult to make the distinction between the role of the civil servant and that of the spokesperson for the minister's own

political party," it says with something approaching disdain.

This "best practice" checklist of guidance, which will form the new so-called Red Book for press officers, follows concern from ministers and the party's own spin-doctors that the Government Information Service (GIS) falls far short of Labour's successful media manipulation in opposition.

It will be seen as a New Labour bible - the Alastair Campbell way to handle the media.

One of the biggest shake-ups for the information officers will be at weekends, when the old days of listening to the news and waiting for calls from reporters will be gone for ever. In a withering aside on the old practices, the guidelines say: "A home phone and television set are clearly not enough."

Instead, the weekend duty officials will be fully kitted out with a text pager, a digital mobile phone (presumably digital to prevent electronic eavesdropping), a fax and a laptop computer with access to news wires. No mention is made of who will pay the bill.

The document also warns about using off-the-record guidance to journalists - when nothing is for publication - only when "absolutely necessary", preferring instead the "unattributable" guidance to hacks

or better still on the record.

Much of the language is high-minded, telling press officers that the GIS relies on its "credibility, a quality that is hard won and easily lost". The central role of Mr Campbell is made explicit. "Periodically, the Chief Press Secretary will brief Heads of Information on the strategic messages and style which should underpin Departmental announcements."

The guidelines are also intended to reassure the civil servants afraid they are being asked to play an increasingly political role.

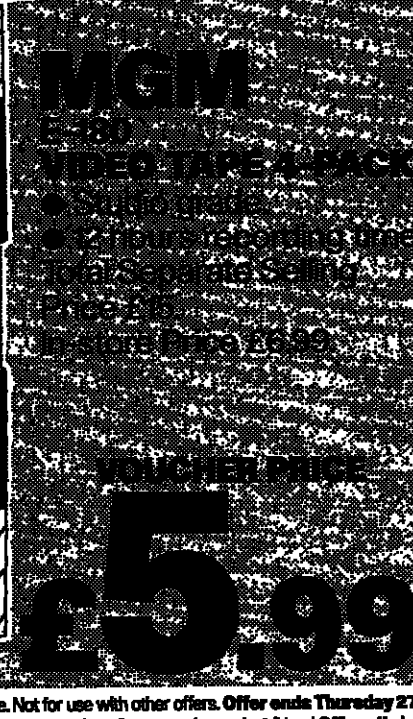
By helping promote departmental policies, a press officer is often also advancing the aims of the party in power, admits the guide. "This is perfectly proper and it is one of the benefits of political office that the facilities of the GIS are available in this way." However, ministers are also bound to uphold the impartiality of civil servants.

Accordingly, officials under pressure to cross the political boundary into impropriety, should give ministers a "polite refusal".

Even less comfort comes in the admission that party politics and government information are hard to disentangle. "The two are inextricably linked," says the document, "not least in the minds of ministers."

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Pro-hunt lobby jumps Commons in pursuit of MPs

A new blood sport – hunting MPs – was launched yesterday in the central lobby of the House of Commons as Parliament was besieged by more than 800 pro-hunt campaigners to rally opposition to the Bill by the Labour MP Michael Foster banning fox-hunting with dogs.

The Commons has rarely seen so many tweed jackets and Barbour's. As it was raining, the massed ranks of tweed gave off a country smell that put one in mind of standing downwind of a barn. Two of Mr Foster's constituents who support hunting were put on his scent, but failed to run him to ground, and accused the sponsor of the Bill of running scared.

Mr Foster dismissed the protest as a "stunt". He told *The Independent*: "They are saying that because two of my constituents wrote to me asking to see me. I am going to a ... meeting. I said I cannot meet them today but any other time they want to meet me. I will do so."

One Tory MP was also avoiding the hunters in the lobby. "I was told at my adoption meeting that if I ever came out

against hunting, they would be hunting me. I've never forgotten that."

The lobby was mounted to try to cut the number of MPs supporting the Bill's second reading on 28 November. The pro-hunt campaigners are hoping that by limiting the majority expected for the Bill, they will avoid the Bill's supporters claiming there is massive popular support to drive it through the Lords, where it is expected to be killed.

Meanwhile, the Government did a U-turn to lift the threat of a ban on fox-hunting on Ministry of Defence land. In a clear appeal to farmers not to ban the army from their land, John Spellar, the defence minister, said in a Commons written answer: "We have renewed licences for foxhunting on the defence estate and there should be no question of training use of private land being withheld on this account. Hunting with hounds is one of the means by which fox numbers on the defence estate are reduced."

— Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent



Tally ho: Fox-hunting with dogs is the target of a Labour MP's Bill Photograph: Andrew Burman

Update for pollution warnings

The Government is moving the goal posts for a key air pollutant; levels which were described as 'poor' will now be classified as 'low pollution'. It's not as daft as it sounds, says Nicholas Schoon, Environment Correspondent.

The new system for warning people about levels of air pollution launched yesterday will give Britain a world lead, according to Michael Meacher, Minister for the Environment.

Instead of air quality being classed as either 'very good, good, poor or very poor' based on concentrations of three gases at any one time, pollution levels will be said to be either 'low, moderate, high or very high', based on five different gases.

Will that make any difference to wheezing asthmatics, or the drivers whose vehicles cause the bulk of the smog? Mr Meacher said the new classification is based rigorously on effects on and risks to people's health, established by extensive recent research. "Science is driving this, not politics," he said.

Once pollution reaches 'moderate' levels the Government says "mild effects unlikely to require action may be noticed among sensitive individuals", which means some asthmatics, and people with other chest diseases like chronic

bronchitis.

When pollution is 'high', people sensitive to pollution may suffer "significant" effects, and need to take action to reduce exposure by staying in. Asthmatics will need to use their inhalers more. When levels are 'very high', people not normally sensitive to pollution may suffer eye irritation, coughing and pain on breathing deeply.

Under the old system, nitrogen dioxide levels above 100 were described as "poor". But now the level at which nitrogen dioxide levels shift from 'low' to 'moderate' is 150 parts per billion (ppb) and 'high' is above 300 ppb.

That means that at nitrogen oxide levels of 200 ppb – when Paris declares a major alert, bans half of all cars from the streets and makes public transport free – in London the pollution would be described as only moderate. "What happened in Paris is not necessarily the best model for us," said Mr Meacher, adding that the new nitrogen oxide bands reflect the latest medical thinking.

When 'very high' levels were forecast the Government would issue an alert and ask motorists to cut unnecessary car journeys. Under the new system there would have been a total of 43 days over the last two winters when these levels were reached somewhere in Britain.

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4 I accept the purchase will be subject to the terms of the current Prospectus.
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Prison staff criticised

Two prison doctors and a warder have been criticised in a report into the suicides of three women inmates.

The spate of suicides at Cornton Vale women's prison, near Stirling, between April and December 1996, led to the longest fatal accident inquiry in Scottish legal history.

Angela Bolland, 19, Denise Devine, 25, and Yvonne Gilmour, 22, were all found hanged.

The inquiry named Kevin Gratton, a prison officer, who left Bolland locked up alone for hours shortly before she died in April 1996. Mistakes were made with Devine because no-one acted after it became apparent she was refusing to eat.

Education Bill split in two

The Government is to split education legislation bringing sweeping change to schools and universities into two Bills amid fears the schools programme could be delayed by opposition to tuition fees.

A Bill introducing undergraduate tuition fees is expected to receive its first reading in the House of Lords late next week.

A second Bill is expected to receive its first reading in December. It will contain a package of measures affecting schools, including steps to abolish grant maintained status.

The decision to divide the legislation into two reflects anxiety that controversy over tuition fees could hold up plans to drive up school standards.

An Erotic Review



The Erotic Print Society REVIEW is now available quarterly to readers for the first time. (As revealed in last Monday's *Independent*.) The writers are well known. The features are provocative. The illustrations are explicit. Only the price is modest: £5.00 for a subscription to four issues.

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7/YOUNG BRITAIN

THE INDEPENDENT
THURSDAY
20 NOVEMBER 1997

Family values for the next generation

BY NICOLE VEASH AND JACK O'SULLIVAN

Many young Britons are disillusioned with their own parents for working long hours. The next generation wants to give their children a better deal, according to 2020 Vision, a survey of 10,000 young people aged between 12-25, exclusively previewed by The Independent every day this week.

Stephen Hartley-Brewer from north-west London is 17 and applying for university. But he is already thinking about when he will become a father, probably, he says, in his thirties. "The basic plan," he says, "is to become a merchant banker, which has a horrendous workload and dawn-till-dusk hours. It's not ideal for kids. So when I decide to have children, I'll give my job up and become a self-employed consultant so that I can work from home. Even though I might still have to work hard, I would be there for them all the time, instead of being that stressed bloke who comes home just before they are going to bed."

Stephen's attitude is typical of his generation. Asked to define a good parent, those surveyed ranked "providing nice home and clothes" bottom in their list of priorities, behind standards and discipline and concern about education. More important than all of these was "love and time spent with chil-

dren" - 77 per cent said it was the most important characteristic of a good parent.

Researchers found young people often did not regard their own parents as role models, because they had failed to provide sufficient affection or support.

Both young men and women strongly backed equal sharing of responsibility for children, although women were sceptical that the men would live up to their high principles.

"I'd want to be there for them," says Danny Docherty, 18, a DJ and youth worker from Birkenhead. "If it came to push, I'd be happy to look after the kids and stay at home. I'd give up my career gladly. The well-being of a human being is more important than a career... you have to choose before you have kids whether it's career that comes first or family. Because, to be honest, you can't have both."

Chris and Sarah Eappariello from Bishop Stortford have already been forced into making the choice. Aged 25 and 24 respectively, they have a 16-month-old daughter, Francesca. After she was born, Chris, an internal auditor, switched his job, which involved a lot of overseas travel so he could spend more time at home. Sarah, who had worked in investment banking, gave up her job.

They have decided against having a nanny or placing Francesca in a nursery. "I felt it was a lot better to be giving my time to Francesca than going out to work. We made that decision before we got married," says Sarah.

'Children will be my priority in life'



Family girl: Beverley Bloom at the Café Du Paris. Photograph: Graham Jepson

Beverley Bloom, 22, is the daughter of self-made property tycoon Desmond, who is said to be worth more than £40m.

She is also a self-confessed shopping addict and celebrity "It girl".

"My brother, Baron, and I never had nannies. My parents actually didn't believe that we should be brought up by somebody else. As soon as we were born they decided to work from home so they could spend as much time as possible with us."

"People always find it surprising when I tell them my dad built up a successful business and didn't sacrifice time with his family. But it was a conscious decision on his behalf because he didn't want to be one of these stay-away fathers."

"I actually think my dad was unusual. Most people I know didn't see their parents very much when they were growing up. My mum and dad didn't even get baby sitters when they went out in the evening."

"Every time they needed to go a party, we went with them, which was really fun. We were never excluded from any part of their life and that's why the four of us are still so close today."

"I would never have a nanny to look after my children because I just don't understand how people can bear to leave their children with strangers."

"You miss out on so many things if you are not around to see your children grow up. And nothing can take the place of parents who spend a lot of time at home."

"I know people who buy their children presents to make up for not being there, but there's no way material goods can replace time and affection. In the end, there's no point in having a family if you can't spend time with your children."

"When I get married, children and family will definitely be my priority in life. I want a stable home life and marriage is definitely the best place for me to bring up my children. Divorce is really awful for families. I think if you are going to get married you should stick with it and work out your problems."

"Having said that, most of my friends long to get married and have children, even if their own parents have split up, so maybe young people want to give family life another chance."

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COMPAQ

The teenagers who worship the god of mammon

They are the generation who have everything. Trainers with the right label, home entertainment systems in their bedrooms and mountain bikes in the garage. A picture emerges from the 2020 Vision survey of a young nation more materialistic than any before.

Eleven-year-old Michael Bertiner, from Bedfordshire, is saving up to buy the latest must-have computer game for his Playstation. "I'm going to buy Tomb Raider II as soon as it comes out," he says. "It's going to cost about £50, which is a lot, but I've been saving up for it. And I would rather spend my pocket money on quality things because there's no point in wasting it on sweets. I might as well buy the best."

Gillian Meade, 15, from Hadlow in Kent, thinks peer pressure lies behind her generation's materialism. "We are judged on everything. What clothes we have, what trainers we wear, even what walkman we have and that's why we are so materialistic," she says.

"But I don't necessarily think this is a bad thing, because it makes us realise that you've got to do something to earn enough money so you can then go and buy what you want."

Jo Gardiner, campaigns director for the Industrial Society, agrees saying: "Young people can be classified as materialistic because they buy a lot of things, but it's probably not as straightforward as that."

"What we actually see is them purchasing a badge of belonging. If they don't own a stereo, for example, they are switched off from youth music culture. To belong they have got to go and buy a stereo. This ends up becoming a necessity not a luxury."

The young also hanker after high-tech accoutrements - more own a television set (83 per cent) than a book (80 per cent). Nearly a quarter want a computer - if they don't already have one - while a Playstation or Sega Megadrive is fourth on their wishlist.

TELL US YOUR VIEW

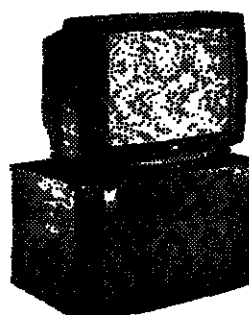
The Independent welcomes comment or responses to the articles on this page from readers aged between 12 and 25. Please write to Nicole Veash at The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL; by fax on 071 293 2451; or e-mail to n.veash@independent.co.uk. We will publish a selection of views later in the week. If you have missed any of our survey details, they are on our Internet site at: <http://www.independent.co.uk>

2020 Vision is co-ordinated by the Industrial Society with additional research by MORI. The Action Agenda along with full results of the research will be launched next Monday.

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سكزا من الراجل

Island Records founder to float new ventures

Chris Blackwell, founder of Island Records, recently severed his links with Polygram. In Strawberry Hill, Jamaica, he told Phil Davison why he had cut loose, and about his plans for a new label.

Chris Blackwell left his native Jamaica and began selling records to London's West Indian community from the back seat of his Mini Cooper at the age of 25. After launching Bob Marley, Cat Stevens, U2 and a galaxy of other stars, he sold that business, Island Records, to Polygram in 1989 for \$300m (£180m) but retained artistic control of output.

Now, after a falling out with Polygram, Blackwell is starting from scratch in the record business. Except, of course, he has a bit more cash to play with and still owns the Island Trading boutique chain and Island Outpost properties - an upmarket chain of luxury hotels and exclusive resorts.

Speaking from his 12-villa Strawberry Hill resort in the lush hills above Kingston, Blackwell, a white Jamaican from a wealthy island family, revealed that he will compete with Polygram through his little-known Jamaican record label Blue Mountain Music.

The focus will be reggae, particularly reggae artists Sly and Robbie, and a newly-signed English pop group, Marlena.

"Sly and Robbie played with

orary doctorate last week from the University of the West Indies in Kingston, along with one of his protégés, reggae star Jimmy Cliff, for their services to music.

He explained for the first time why he had resigned last month as the chairman of Island Records and from the board of Polygram after a dispute with Polygram boss Jacques Levy.

"Basically, we'd not been seeing eye to eye as to what my role would be. What I had wished to do was to expand a wholly entertainment group within Polygram. That's why I sold them my film group, Island Pictures, three years ago. I said, look, I've run Island Records for 35 years, I don't want to do just the same thing.

"I wanted to buy the music TV cable company The Box, which now is one of the foremost ways of breaking music, and 50 per cent of Interscope, which was available at the time and which has really been the most successful record company over the last three years, with artists like Nine Inch Nails and Tupac Shakur. If they had allowed Island to buy it, Polygram would unquestionably have been the number one company in the world.

"The chairman of the board [Mr Levy] was not really keen on these acquisitions."

Commenting on his 35 years with Island Records, Blackwell explained: "Frankly, the bigger one gets, even when it's independently-owned, it's very hard. I found it impossible to keep the same spirit as when it was very small. When it's very small, you can have a sort of guerrilla force type spirit. As we became a small corporation, it became difficult to compete. As a guerrilla force, you can compete with an army but as a small army, it's very difficult to compete with a big one."

A major catalyst in Blackwell's split with Polygram was a disagreement over a new Island Pictures film called *Gingertread Man*, scripted by John Grisham and directed by Robert Altman. "When the film was first shown to everyone, we all liked it. But ... it didn't test very well and Polygram wanted to change the movie. Polygram's top [film] man, Michael Kuhn, never spoke to Altman and another editor was put in on the film. I disagreed with that completely. For right or wrong, Island's approach has always been to really support the artist."

"Altman has been an entirely independent maverick operator in Hollywood for a very long time. Once you decide to go into business with him, you're essentially putting your confidence in him and his eye and what he wants to do. So I rang Levy and said, look, I want to resign. This is not how Island has ever operated."

In addition to Blue Mountain Music, Blackwell hopes to market the Jamaican football team, nicknamed Reggae Boys, who qualified last weekend for the World Cup finals.

"We might make a compilation of reggae songs that have been written about them. I think they could take over from Brazil as everybody's second favourite team."



Island of dreams: Chris Blackwell at his Strawberry Hill resort in Jamaica. He has just been awarded an honorary doctorate for services to music by the University of the West Indies

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Bob Marley: Put on world stage by Blackwell

the late Peter Tosh," he said. "They've played with Grace Jones and they've been the backbone of Jamaican record production for a pretty long time. They produced the theme from the new Jamaican film *Dancehall Queen*, which was a big hit for us this year."

Marlena is a two-person combo, with 21-year-old Marlena Buck from Blackpool and her 29-year-old co-songwriter Benny Dimassa from London. Both are Anglo-Italians. "Marlena hasn't put out any records yet. It's very good sort of pop music. It's not rock, it's sort of between folkie and pop. If there's anyone you'd say she's a bit like ... No, I don't want to say who she's like ... Well, Kate Bush ... But you don't want to say someone's like someone. It's kind of damning."

"Under the deal with Polygram, we can't put out any records until next July."

Blackwell, 60, who in the Fifties was aide-de-camp to Jamaica's British governor Sir Hugh Foot, received an hon-

Old devils of heavy metal make a new pact

Cardinal Ratzinger of the Vatican must be pleased, wherever he is. Black Sabbath, a band he once condemned as an instrument of the Devil, is back. Despite years of biting the heads off bats and being surrounded by the smell of patchouli oil, the original Brummie heavy-metal band is planning a two-night get-together in their home-town next month.

It was hoped that *This is Spinal Tap* might have meant the death-knell for the hairy old Satanists of rock, but irony, it seems, is an unknown concept in a world where songs have titles like "A Bit of Finger", "Fairies Wear Boots" and "Rat Salad". Old denim never dies and Black Sabbath have sold out for two concerts in front of 20,000 fans unable to see the original line-up since they went their separate ways in 1979.

Instead, bands called Black

Sabbath, with a variety of members, have been playing with the original lead-singer, Tony Iommi, who made sure early on that he owned the rights to the name Black Sabbath. This made little difference to another member, a Mr Ozzie Osborne, who made himself famous in his own right by biting the heads off things on stage and once, it is reported, exploding a few tons of raw liver over an audience.

When Black Sabbath last played together in Britain there was also a Labour government, led by Jim Callaghan.

In the years that the different members have been trailing around stadiums full of spotty Americans or, worse, small theatres full of 35-year-old "snakebite" drinkers from Dudley, the heavy-metal scene has gone through a number of incarnations.

— Paul McCann



Happy and glorious: City workers and visitors waving to the Queen and Prince Philip yesterday as the royal couple passed by on their way to the Guildhall in the City of London to celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary
Photograph: Brian Harris

Summer reading schools failed to raise standards

The Government's summer literacy schools failed to improve children's reading, but did make them more enthusiastic about learning. A report to be published today is expected to question the use of "quick-fix" solutions for poor readers, says Judith Judd, Education Editor.

Overall, the reading of 900 11-year-olds who attended the literacy summer schools scheme did not improve. Some actually chalked up lower scores on tests at the end of the course than they did at the beginning. Equally, some did better.

All the pupils, who were among those just below the expected standard for their age in reading, received 50 hours extra tuition in 29 two-week summer schools at a cost of

£300,000.

The scheme, which has the personal backing of the Prime Minister and was much trumpeted by the Government, was first publicised in June when Stephen Byers, the schools standards minister, said that 870 children would "be offered the chance to boost their reading skills at the new literacy summer schools".

At the end of August, the Prime Minister chose to mark his return from holiday by announcing that the scheme was being expanded to include 16,000 pupils at 500 centres next year.

Today's report, commissioned by advisers at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, is based on tests carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research. The foundation tested a sample of children who attended this year's summer schools before and after their courses.

Its report is understood to suggest that other Government proposals such as a daily literacy hour in primary schools have a better prospect of raising standards than the summer schools. Ministers will, however, be able to argue that the schools have been a success because they have motivated pupils. The report says that they are more positive about

both school and reading than they were last term. This may prove important in improving their reading in the long term.

Better literacy is one of the Government's key pledges on education. Ministers have set a target for 80 per cent of 11-year-olds to have reached the expected standard in English by the year 2002. The present figure is 62 per cent.

Anne Barnes, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English, said: "You cannot necessarily expect progress to show up immediately in tests. If there is an improvement in attitude that may lead to improvement over a whole year."

The Government, she suggested, is confused. There might be an argument for providing a reading activity during the holidays but that would not necessarily lead to improved reading. Children progress best with teachers who know them well, she added.

In August, Mr Blair promised another £4 million of Government money for summer literacy schools and Downing Street said that Maurice Hatter, chairman of IMO Precisions Controls, would donate a further £1 million. Mr Hatter's donation was disclosed hours after Mr Blair appealed for private sector investment to match the Government's.

New regime for young offenders

Up to eight jails for criminals aged 15 to 17 are to be established as part of a new approach to dealing with juvenile offenders, under plans being drawn up by prison officials.

The Prison Service wants to separate about 2,600 juveniles under 18 years old from other offenders and set up special regimes in an attempt to divert them away from a life of crime.

The proposal was disclosed yesterday as the Chief Inspector of Prisons published a major study into young offenders aged under 22, which concluded that current the system was doing more harm than good and needed a radical overhaul.

Sir David Ramsbotham's report said: "More damage is done to immature adolescents than to any other type of prisoner by current conditions."

In a surprise response, Richard Tilt, director-general of the Prison Service, said his agency proposed to separate offenders aged 15, 16 and 17 and place them in about seven or eight dedicated establishments. Offenders aged under 18 are currently locked up in Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs) with others up to 22 years old and in a small number of cases adult prisons.

The new "juvenile jails" would probably be based at existing YOIs. They are likely to include special training programmes, education and greater emphasis on physical activities.

The creation of new regimes will cost an estimated £18m a year at a time when money is extraordinarily tight for prison system and the number of inmates is rising.

Mr Tilt said he would present the proposals to ministers by the summer, but suggested more funding was likely to be needed.

Joyce Quin, Home Office minister, said they would be examined as part of a current review of the criminal justice system.

Yesterday's report said that a large proportion of those aged under 22 were locked into a cycle of reoffending, had a history of social service care, had taken drugs, and were victims of abuse.

It concluded: "Unless they [young offenders] receive individual attention and opportunities to change, their time in custody will make them worse rather than better."

— Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

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DAILY POEM

by Kathleen Jamie

Whatever happened to friends like Liz,
who curled her legs on a leather settee,
and touched your knee, girl/girl,
as she whispered what the businessmen of Edinburgh
wear beneath their suits -

laughed and hooked her hair back
saying Tuesday, giving some bloke
hand relief, she'd looked up at the ceiling
for the hundredth time that lunch-hour,
and screaming, slammed the other hand down hard
on the panic button; had to stand there
topless in front of the bouncers
and the furious punter, saying
sorry, I'm sorry, it was just a spider...

Whatever happens to girls like Liz
fresh out of school, at noon on a Saturday
waiting for her shift at Hotspots
sauna, in a dressing gown
with a pink printed bunny
who follows you to the window
as you look out at the city
and calls you her pal. She says, you're a real pal.

Today's selection from the five poets who have won this year's Paul Hamlyn Foundation Awards for Artists comes from Kathleen Jamie's latest collection *The Queen of Sheba* (Bloodaxe, £6.95), which also won a Somerset Maugham Award.

سكرا من الامل

Small fry launches big duel for the skies



British Airways' announcement that it will launch a low-cost carrier was hailed by some as 'welcome competition'. For other smaller, 'no-frills' airlines it is the start of a war, says Randeep Ramesh, Transport Correspondent.

For many airlines, BA's move has an uncomfortable ring about it. They believe that the world's most profitable airline is prepared to throw money at an enterprise in order to snatch market share from its low-cost rivals.

Stelios Haji-Ioannou, the Greek businessman who brought no-frills flying to Britain with easyJet, it is a clear case of BA pinching his idea. "BA wanted to buy 49 per cent of easyJet. BA said they could not proceed with the purchase because of management were unsure of getting regulatory approval. The next thing I hear is that they have photocopied our idea," said Mr Haji-Ioannou.

Many point out that BA has

a track record in "playing hardball". Sir Freddie Laker, the low-fare pioneer, started his Skytrain services to the US in the 1970s but it collapsed after cut-throat competition from the big carriers.

Years later he won a £6m settlement from BA and other airlines after his claims that big carriers caused the failure of his service in 1982.

When Richard Branson started Virgin Atlantic, it was targeted in a "dirty-tricks" campaign by BA. The affair ended with it paying Mr Branson libel damages in an out-of-court settlement.

For easyJet - the original low-cost carrier - nothing less than a full investigation by the European Commission competition authorities will suffice.

"We have a dominant airline willing to lose unlimited sums of money competing with substantially smaller airlines that could be driven out in the process," read newspaper adverts in yesterday's papers. The headline over the full page ad is entitled "Beauty and the Beast" and is illustrated with mugshots of BA's chief executive, Bob Ayling, and the manager of the new airline - codenamed Blue Sky - Barbara Cassani.



Duel for the skies: easyJet chief Stelios Haji-Ioannou and yesterday's anti-BA adverts

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

And the advert's wording pulls no punches. "It seems to us like a textbook case of abuse of dominant position under article 86 of the EC Treaty. We expect the EC to investigate this new cheap trick by BA and stop it ... Look at their track record: Laker, British Caledonian, Danair, Virgin, who is next? They were all either bought or nearly or actually driven out of business." BA were not impressed. "There's plenty of room for all of us," said a spokesman.

Many of Mr Haji-Ioannou's peers say this is typically explosive behaviour from the Greek businessman. Frank Pullman, who runs Luton airport - where easyJet flies from, says the local authorities - the owners of the airport - were threatened with legal action by Mr Haji-Ioannou when the airport's owners would not let him "buy" it. "I think Stelios' first three calls are to his lawyers, his lawyers and his lawyers," said Mr Pullman.

THE PRICES BA MUST MATCH

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- London Luton to Barcelona £78 return with Easyjet
- London Luton to Geneva £98 return with Easyjet
- London to Paris £69 return with Eurostar (All tickets carry restrictions)

Genetically-modified food to hit shelves in the New Year

Up to 60 per cent of products on supermarket shelves will contain genetically-modified ingredients from the New Year. Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor, explains how retailers' opposition to the new food technology has been circumvented.

All foods containing genetically-modified soya and maize protein are to be labelled under an agreement announced by the food industry today.

The labels will be applied to more than half of manufactured products from next year, including meat and savoury items, bread, pastries, margarine and spreads, chocolate, beer and baby food. Soya or maize protein is added to these foods, mostly to improve their texture and consistency.

UK supermarkets which have opposed the introduction of genetically-modified foods on the grounds that they were of no benefit to the consumer have been forced to accept them by the superior financial muscle of US food producers.

Most soya protein used in Britain is imported from the US, where 15 per cent is grown from genetically-modified seed. However there is no requirement on US producers to segregate the genetically-modified product from the unmodified one and UK manufacturers have no way of knowing which they are using.

A spokeswoman for the Food and Drink Federation said: "It is highly likely that soya arriving in the UK now contains some which has been genetically modified ... as [products] start appearing they will be labelled."

The labels will be unequivocal, stating that the product contains genetically-modified

ingredients, not that it "may" contain them, she said.

Today sees the launch of a new exhibition at the Science Museum. Entitled "Future Foods" it will be opened by Tessa Jowell, the public health minister, and Jeff Rooker, agriculture minister, and predicts that consumers will soon be able to choose from potatoes that make low-fat chips, broccoli that helps prevent cancer and strawberries that last longer.

Genetically-modified soya, developed in the US, has been altered to make it resistant to a pesticide known as Roundup. This allows crops to be sprayed with Roundup at an early stage, killing weeds but without damaging the soya itself, increasing yields.

Some supermarkets have resisted the development because of consumer fears and because the benefits were all on the farmers' side. A spokeswoman for Asda said: "We have not stocked any foods made entirely of genetically-modified ingredients and we keep a list of foods guaranteed to be free of them. We are not against them provided they can be shown to have benefits for customers."

Professor Dick Flavell, director of the John Innes Centre in Norwich, said genetically-modified wheat and barley would soon follow soya and maize. "Unless there is a backlash on a large scale across Europe to make the US change the way it handles things it is going to be inevitable," he said.

"I personally am quite confident in the technology provided it is monitored on a case-by-case basis. We have always known that certain modifications, such as introducing a nut protein, could be hazardous [to those with a nut allergy]. Those who want the technology banned are undermining the position of the starving people in Ethiopia."

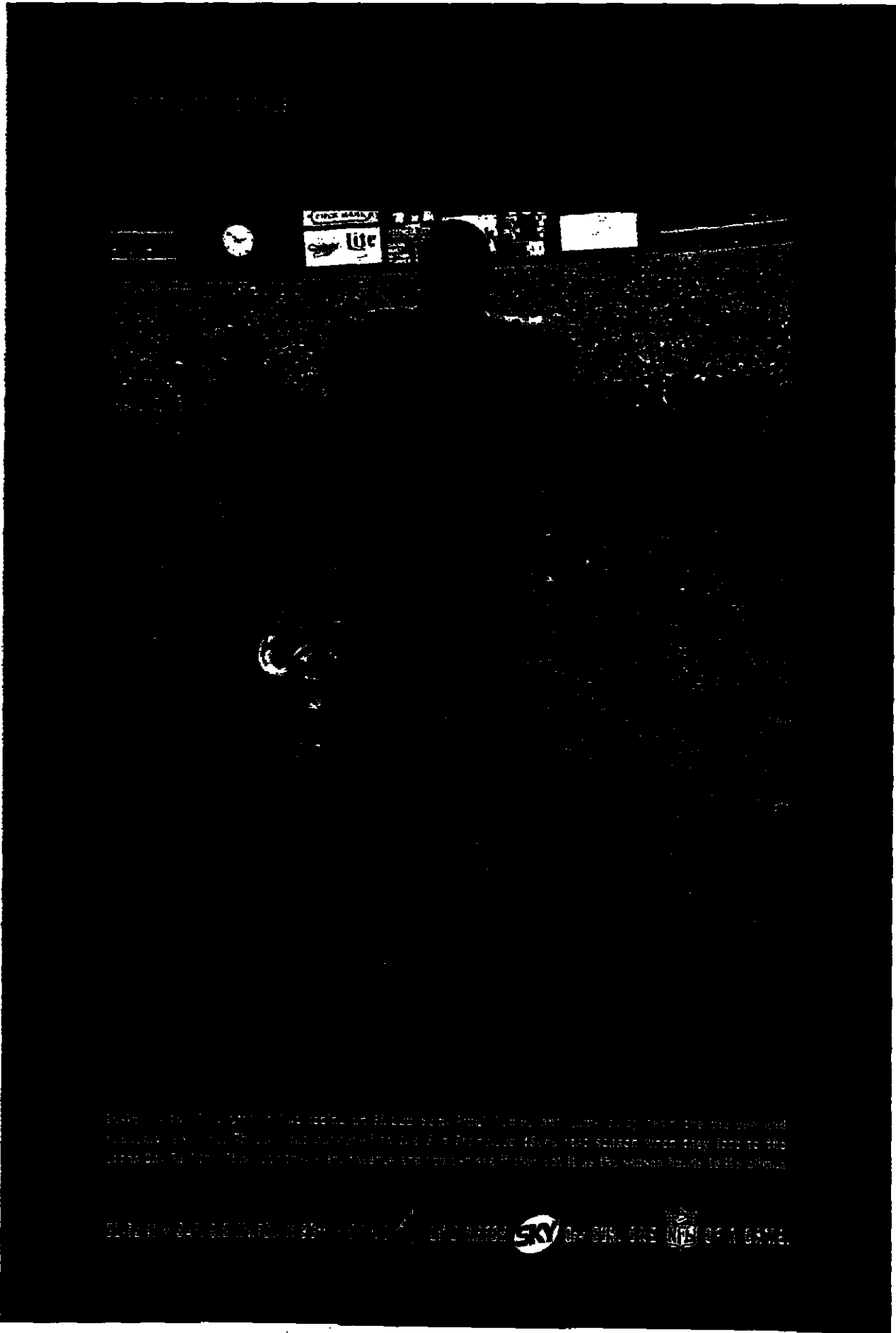
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Somalia faces floods disaster

Torrential rains have killed thousands of Somalis and trapped many more on islands in the flood. Marcus Tanner says any relief effort will be hampered by donor countries' fears of becoming entangled with the country's notorious warlords.



Flood-stricken Somalia was facing disaster yesterday after the country's two main rivers burst their banks and joined together, creating vast flood plains and trapping thousands of people.

Western aid agencies in the country, which has been torn apart by clan warfare in the last few years, said several thousand may have died in the rains, while tens of thousands more were marooned.

"We are having to make our assessments from the air", said Paul Anticini, a Red Cross officer involved in the relief effort said. "What we are seeing is huge tracts of land and huge

crowds on small islands. I hesitate to think what will happen to them. They are without shelter; some have a few sheep with them. We have seen people standing on roof tops which are collapsing. Our dilemma is whether to try to rescue people, or try to get food to them first. On top of that, the waters are still rising."

low sea-level and it is here that the two rivers have merged into a huge lake.

Somalis depend almost entirely for their livelihood on crops and livestock. The floods have swept away recently planted maize and a large proportion of the cattle.

After the waters recede, Somalis will face horrendous problems with contamination and diseases such as cholera, Mr Anticini said.

An international appeal for \$10m (£6m) to support the relief operation has resulted in only \$5.6m so far, the United Nations Children's Fund said.

The country remains so unstable that many nations are reluctant to offer aid out of a justifiable fear that the relief will be simply kidnapped by the warring factions and used for the benefit of their militias, rather than civilians. Somalia has not even had a national government since the overthrow of Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991.

As a result of the collapse of Somalia's infrastructure, the aid effort is having to be co-ordinated in neighbouring Kenya.



One for the album: Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands holds on to her hat as her husband, Prince Claus (left) takes snapshots of the Sphinx in Giza while on a sightseeing tour of the Sphinx and the Pyramids yesterday. Photograph: AFP

Egypt beefs up security

Egypt deployed more forces at tourist sites yesterday in the wake of the massacre of 58 tourists at Luxor. "This could happen anywhere in the world," President Hosni Mubarak said at Cairo airport after seeing off Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands at the end of her three-day visit to Egypt.

President Mubarak sacked his interior minister after publicly berating him for lapses that enabled Muslim militants to carry out their bloodiest attack since their armed campaign began in 1992.

The new interior minister, Habib el-Adli, replaced top officials at the ministry and security officials in Luxor on his first full day in office. "The area is full of tourists and you tell me the police are two kilometres away? This is a joke," showed Mr Mubarak saying at the temple on Tuesday as Mr Alfi stood by. Mr Mubarak has ordered the Prime Minister, Kamal Ganzouri, to head a special committee to draw up a "water-tight plan" to ensure the safety of tourists.

Letters, page 20
— Reuters, Cairo

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Film studio bomb kills 23 in India

At least 23 people died in a car bomb blast near a film studio in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad yesterday, police said.

About 35 people were also wounded when the bomb, which had been planted in a parked jeep, exploded at midday as a convoy of cars arrived for the first shot of a new film.

"Twenty-three people have died so far", said HJ Dora, director general of police in Hyderabad. "We have to find out how it was triggered. But the impact of the blast was very high. Many buildings have been affected."

The interior minister of the state of Andhra Pradesh, A Madhava Reddy, said the bomb was set off by remote control. The injured included the screen actor Mohanbabu, who is also a member of the upper house of parliament, and the MP Paritala Ravi. Officials said their injuries were not life-threatening.

Police said nobody had claimed responsibility for the bomb, and there was no immediate reaction from political groups in the Indian capital.

The dead included a five-member crew from the television station E-TV, whose car bore the brunt of the blast as it led the convoy. Four vehicles were hit by the explosion.

The state chief minister, N Chandrababu Naidu, who was in New Delhi, said that investigations were being carried out, but that it was too early to draw any conclusions.

Andhra Pradesh state, of which Hyderabad is the capital, has been shaken by a violent campaign by outlawed Maoist insurgents. Seven policemen died and six were wounded on Monday in a landmine explosion about 140 miles north of Hyderabad in the fourth such attack in the past two years.

— Reuters, Hyderabad

Netanyahu returns home to confront party mutineers

The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, returned home from a trip to the US and Britain to mount a counter-offensive against rebellious leaders in his ruling Likud party bent on driving him from power. They urged that he be deposed after a party convention last week rescinded primary elections to choose parliamentary candidates.

A Netanyahu aide, David Bar-Ilan, said the mutiny posed "no threat" to his leadership but the feud was expected to make his premiership vulnerable as he faces struggles over the budget and on issues related to the peace process.

— Reuters, Jerusalem

Mass-murder suspect held

A man sought in a killing spree in Taiwan surrendered to police after releasing the last of five South African family members he had held hostage. Chen Chin-hsing released Anne Alexander, the wife of the South African defence attaché, and was whisked away in a police motorcade.

The police had hunted Mr Chen for six months for his alleged role in the kidnapping and murder of a television star's teenage daughter and the murder of a plastic surgeon and two nurses.

— AP, Taipei

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13/TECHNOLOGY

Time ticks by for millennium bug tsar

One man, one day a week is Don Cruickshank serious about getting British business to take action against the 'Millennium Bug' that will affect computers after December 31 1999. Charles Arthur, Science Editor, discovered that he is - and that he expects things to get worse before they get better.

What should we expect from the run-up to 2000? Computer cowboys who will rip companies off while doing a shoddy job of re-programming their systems, says Don Cruickshank, the man appointed by the Government to ginger business people into taking the problem seriously.

The trouble is, some businesses aren't yet aware of the problems they face. And computer cowboys are only the beginning.

"That's so certain, it's one of the first statements you can make. Prices [of skilled staff] will go up, which will attract - um - marginal players into the game. And the later you are, the bigger the problem you have. It's like having a leak and calling out an emergency plumber. You're completely in their hands."

Then again, Mr Cruickshank's job as head of Action 2000 sounds, initially, like a wonderful sinecure. He will work on it for only one day a week. But surely he will carry the can if - or, more truthfully, when - things go wrong after the clocks ring out 31 December 1999. Perhaps the sinecure is a poisoned chalice?

"Ah, well," he says with a smile. "That's public life."

But Mr Cruickshank, presently head of the telecoms regulator Ofcom, doesn't think that his post should be one requiring a Bat-phone and an underground cave with a high-speed car. He isn't going to solve problems: he's going to make businesses aware that they face them.

Not Batman, then, solving the troubles of computing's Gotham City? "Afraid not," he told *The Independent*, in one of his first interviews since becoming the UK's bug tsar. "There isn't going to be one of those."

Instead, Action 2000 will probably set up a Web site offering advice and "best practice" for approaching the problem. Not



Don Cruickshank: 'Businesses are like swans. Sailing serenely along on the surface, but underneath they're paddling like hell'

Photograph: Rui Xavier

Batman, but the Batman Helpline.

The point about the Millennium Bug is that it is not only of interest to computer nerds, or PC owners, or people who work on computers. Because chips are so ubiquitous, any flaws will affect hundreds of citizens who thought they never touched a computer.

The problem arises because many chips and programs store the year as a two-digit number. After 1999, that number will for the first time decrease instead of increasing when the clock ticks over. The computer may decide either that the date is 1900, or that a serious error has occurred and that it should shut down.

Nobody knows what the result will be.

Timeclock safes might not open. Trains might sail past red signal lights. Automated hospital drips could shut down. Lifts could freeze. Supermarket fridges might cut off, leaving food to spoil over the New Year weekend (starting on Saturday, 1 January 2000).

In fact he thinks that many business people are adopting a deceptive approach to their 2000 efforts. "It puzzled me at first. They will admit things in private about the problems they're having which they absolutely won't in public. I think they're attempting to be like swans. Sailing serenely along on the surface, but underneath they're paddling like hell. There's a lot of that going on."

● The introduction of the European currency should be delayed because of massive computer problems due to bite at the millennium, a committee of MPs was told last night.

Robin Guenier, executive director of the Taskforce 2000 group set up to pre-empt the bug, said 40,000 medium-sized and large businesses had not yet even begun to address the problem. The majority of computers on sale now were likely to fail at midnight on 31 December 1999.

The computer industry had a "dreadful" record of missing deadlines, he said, with 80 per cent of projects ending late, he told the Commons science and technology committee.

"The single most evident reason for postponing the Euro is that the year 2,000 problem is happening at the same time. We are doing the largest IT job we have ever done and the second largest," he said.

While some sectors were way ahead - almost every City solicitors had a partner working on the legal implications, for example - others had barely recognised the enormity of the problem.

A recent survey had suggested that only 10 per cent of businesses had carried out an audit of their systems. 57 per cent planned to do nothing until 1999 - far too late - and while 80 per cent planned to do the necessary work in house less than half had the staff to do it.

Class dispute hits Islington 'cyberstreet'

Microsoft has been accused of discriminating against council tenants in favour of white middle-class residents in the creation of its "cyberstreet" in Islington, north London. The result would be to create a division between cyber-haves and have-nots - determined by who already has the equipment.

Robyn Heaton, who lives on the street, yesterday said the experiment, in which 30 people were given telephone connections and subscriptions to the Internet via Microsoft, and in some cases free computers, was invalid because it did not represent the diversity of people in the street. "I'm a council tenant, and when they sent the letters around in February, I didn't get one. But I was really excited, so I rang up and they said they wanted a diverse street. But then all they asked was my name, and said that they were overwhelmed with responses."

She said that when she asked other council tenants and housing-association residents, she found they had not been invited to take part either.

Judy Gibbons, head of the Microsoft Network, said Microsoft had sent letters to all 80 homes in the street and received 34 replies. There were 30 places on the scheme and 15 people who already had computers were automatically accepted. "The only basis for the other selection was picking names out of a hat," she said.

The experiment began in March and was recently extended from six months to a year.

Ms Heaton said the experiment cannot be a valid measure of what the wider population will want from computers and the Internet - Microsoft's declared aim from the cyberstreet trial - because it was biased towards people who already had a computer, and against council tenants.

The cost of the technology - up to £1,000 for a computer - represents a barrier that many lower-paid people find insuperable. But Fred Eagle, a council tenant, yesterday said his family was taking part in the trial, and that some middle-class people were not included.

— Charles Arthur, Science Editor

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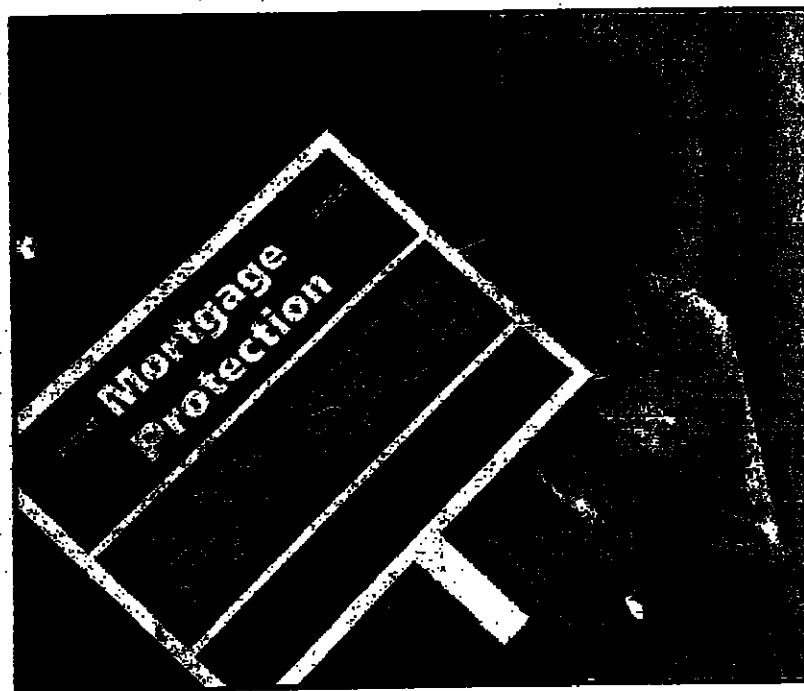
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D Kentucky Stained Hardwood Exterior Door 78 x 33 x 1 1/2 ins.

Action over past seven years

Between October 1990 and October 1991 extensive surveys of our existing supply base were undertaken, involving hundreds of visits and instructions were sent to all our suppliers to stop making claims of sustainability on their packaging which could not be proved. We looked for partners with whom we could work. The World Wide Fund for Nature (UK) was willing to help us resolve the problem.

We both recognised that a simple boycott of tropical timber was not the answer since it was unfair on the tropical producers and would not address the issue of poor forestry in non-tropical countries.

In September 1991 B&Q set the following targets - by the end of 1993 to only buy timber from suppliers who could identify the source forest region and by the end of 1995 to only buy timber which was, according to our own judgement, from well-managed forests. At the time our stance was controversial, attracting criticism from both the environmental movement (who still believed we should boycott tropical timber) and industry.

Recognising that our own judgement would not be sufficient in the long term, we had earlier joined a group called the Forest Stewardship Council which was already discussing the concept of independent certification of forests and timber products. Before long we became active players to



Dr. Alan Knight
Environmental Policy Controller



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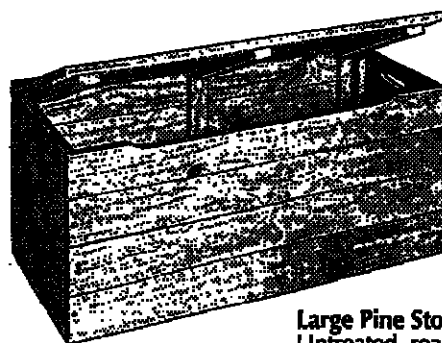
help it become established, with our environmental specialist, Alan Knight, serving on the interim board between 1992 and 1994.

Satisfied with our progress for both the 1993 and 1995 targets, we reported our results publicly in the form of maps and reports.

By May 1995 we were ready to set the target that from the end of 1999 we will only buy timber products with FSC certification.

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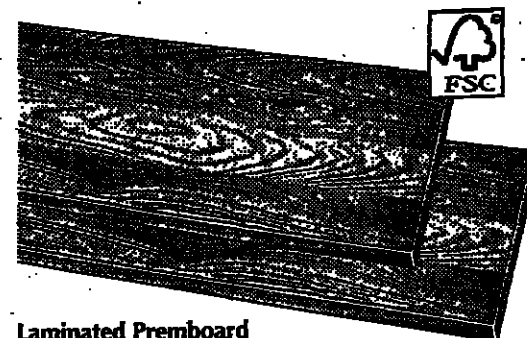
Each of our buyers receives monthly reports which summarise the progress in their product range and the commitment of their suppliers. There are still many political and practical hurdles to cross before we achieve our target but the momentum with individual suppliers and relevant organisations in many countries across the world gives us the confidence that we can succeed.



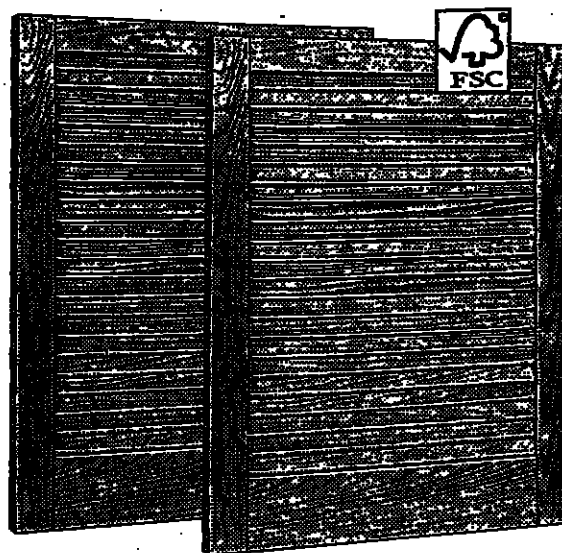
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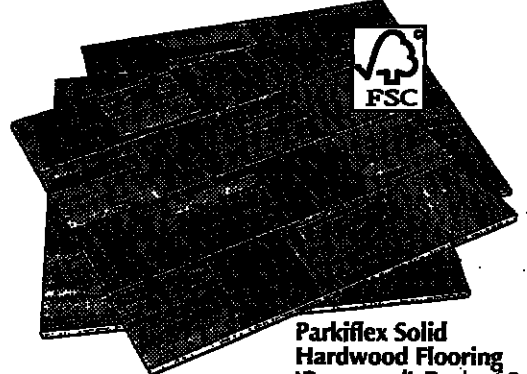
You, along with the producers, suppliers and us the retailer, are part of what we call the supply chain. When you see products with the FSC trade mark you know you can buy products which come from forests which are well managed. So you too can make a difference.



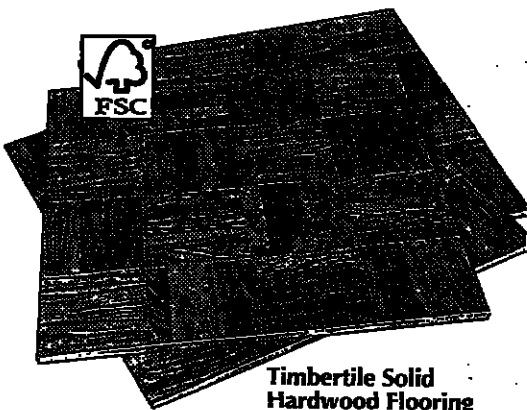
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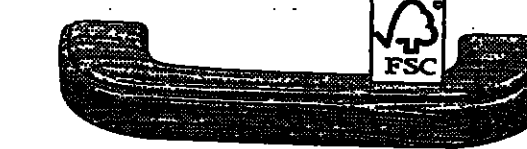
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Finally B&Q would like to thank all our suppliers and their suppliers for the efforts they have made to achieve our targets (in particular those who have already achieved FSC certification and those close to it).

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Reporting on our impact on the environment.

15/SOUTH AFRICA

Apartheid's priests
don sackcloth and
seek forgiveness

The Dutch Reformed Church, once a pillar of apartheid, executed a remarkable about-turn yesterday when it appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. But its confessions about a shameful past may not have gone far enough.

For months it wiggled and twisted, but yesterday the Dutch Reformed Church, which provided a theological basis for apartheid, stood before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and confessed its sins.

Afrikanerdom's largest church said the still ill-white denomination felt guilty for "spiritual and structural injustices". Offering an apology to "the people", the Rev Free Swanepoel, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church) leader, said: "We confess that great wrongs

the UN declared a crime against humanity might have crumbled sooner. Instead, the local NGK clergyman was always on hand to reassure the conscious-stricken army conscript or the uneasy congregation that apartheid had been authorised by God.

Mr Swanepoel was walking a tightrope yesterday, struggling to keep the church's hardliners and liberals on board.

Last year these internal divisions became apparent when the church's Stellenbosch presbytery defied the leadership and offered its own apology to the TRC, the body charged with exposing the truth about South Africa's brutal past.

The Stellenbosch group acknowledged they had turned a blind eye to the plight of millions of South Africans by failing to speak out against apartheid sooner.

It was only in the 1980s that the NGK began to distance itself from the racist system, but its abandonment of the old ideology has been far from clear.

A few months after the Stellenbosch confession, the NGK published a document in which it admitted it "had not always heard the word of God correctly" and had been so concerned with Afrikaner survival that it ignored the miserable existence of the masses.

That did not calm internal disputes. In a church once described the National Party at prayer, some of the most respected theologians still insist there is nothing in the Bible that renders apartheid a sin.

Mr Swanepoel probably disappointed the hardliners yesterday. His submission, which focused on reconciliation rather than how church teaching underpinned apartheid, also failed to please NGK reformers.

"We think the church has missed a glorious opportunity," said Afrikaner lecturer Bernie van der Walt. "Our church caused suffering through the discriminatory system and would like to make every possible move to repair the damage." The NGK remains racially divided. The Afrikaner core has yet to unite with the separate chapters into which it once herded black and Coloured members. On Tuesday a group within the NGK family urged

the TRC to investigate links between the Broederbond and NGK.

The NGK contribution to reconciliation came at the end of three days of "faith" hearings. All week clergy from the other denominations lined up to confess and expose.

Faried Esack, a Muslim theologian, attacked Muslim leaders for betraying and marginalising the anti-apartheid struggle and South Africa's Chief Rabbi, Cyril Harris, said: "The Jewish community benefited from apartheid and an apology must be given ... We ask for forgiveness."



Members of a Dutch Reformed Church congregation in the conservative town of Dullstroom, 120 miles east of Pretoria

Photograph: Magnum

BY MARY
BROAD

have been done." Despite the hugs for Mr Swanepoel from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, TRC chairman, he apology was grudgingly made, and, with schism threatening the NGK, carefully worded. Three weeks ago the church, which with 1.3 million members represents 60 per cent of the Afrikaner population, was sticking by a pledge not to testify. The decision was reversed at an emotional gathering in Pretoria.

The "baas's church" and the Broederbond (a secretive, secular association) were the two pillars of Afrikaner supremacy; the church said it had previously confessed its guilt over apartheid and had no reason to appear before the commission, because the it had never been an "accomplice" to serious rights violations.

To its critics, that proved the NGK had missed the point. Without its biblical support for apartheid and its lobbying for racist legislation, the system

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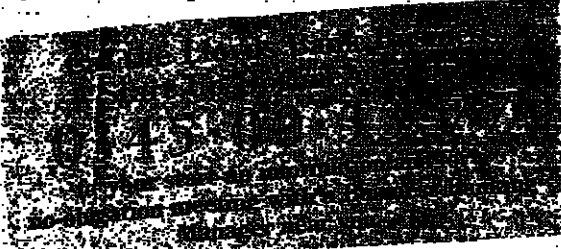
If you employ a tax adviser, get in touch. Alternatively, contact your tax office. The phone number is at the top of your tax return. If you can't get through, or it is outside normal office hours, the Self Assessment Helpline is open on 0645 000 444.*

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Yeltsin hangs on to embattled deputy

The reform programme in Russia may have been threatened by a corruption scandal, but President Boris Yeltsin appears to have found a way of saving the man who is central to his privatisation plans.

President Boris Yeltsin, seeking to end a political scandal over book fees, approved a plan yesterday under which deputy prime ministers would give up additional ministerial posts, his office said.

Critics have charged that \$90,000 (£55,000) in advances paid to Mr Chubais and other government officials to write a book were actually bribes. Mr Chubais and the others have denied any wrongdoing.

The Kremlin statement appeared to be a compromise that would allow Anatoly Chubais to keep his job as first deputy prime minister, but would require him to give up his post as finance minister.

While Mr Chubais and other deputy prime ministers look likely to lose some of their titles, the changes would be largely cosmetic. Mr Chubais would almost certainly remain the government's chief economic policymaker.

Meanwhile, Communists and other hard-line opposition members of parliament approved a non-binding resolution yesterday calling for Mr Chubais to be removed from all government posts. Opposition forces have said that Mr Chubais' removal is a condition for passing the 1998 budget. But Mr Yeltsin has refused the demand so far and appeared unlikely to part with Mr Chubais, a man he considers essential to his economic reform efforts.

According to senior legislators, the Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin struck a deal under which the opposition, which dominates the Duma, or lower chamber of parliament, would no longer make Mr Chubais' complete removal from the government a condition for passing the budget. But the Duma's resolution,

approved last night, indicated that many members would not be satisfied with a deal that left Mr Chubais in Mr Yeltsin's inner circle.

Mr Chubais and several associates accepted the advances for a yet unwritten book on privatisation in Russia. Seeking to suppress the furore over the payments, Mr Yeltsin dismissed three other officials who were to co-author the book.

But the President refused to accept the resignation of Mr Chubais, whom opponents accuse of selling off valuable state properties for below market prices. Mr Yeltsin said Mr Chubais' departure would have negative consequences.

Boris Nemtsov, the other first deputy prime minister, said yesterday that opposition calls for the ousting of Mr Chubais were, in fact, aiding him. "The Communists, whether they mean to or not, are helping Chubais," he said. "They have forgotten that our president does not like it at all when he is pressured, especially when the Communists do it."

— AP, Moscow



Pressing suit: A farmer dressed as a scarecrow taking part in a demonstration in Paris yesterday in which thousands gathered to call for the reform of the European Common Agricultural Policy. Photograph: Gareth Watkins/Reuters

Oslo in row over lesbian priest

A Norwegian lesbian priest who "married" her lover in defiance of church rules triggered a storm of controversy in parliament yesterday.

The Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, a priest in the state Lutheran church, defended the Church Affairs Minister, Jon Lilletun, for saying Siri Sunde should resign. "I don't think it's improper for the minister to react now," he said, adding that Mr Lilletun "also made clear that the church itself would deal with this".

Mr Bondevik also noted that Bishop Rosemarie Kohn, Norway's first female bishop, who ordained Ms Sunde, felt she had broken a promise by entering a legal gay marriage. Norway's church allows women to become priests but bans active gays, defined as those living with a homosexual partner.

Mr Lilletun said Ms Sunde, who has been suspended pending a ruling by the church, should resign. Left-wing MPs criticised Mr Lilletun for giving his blessing to the church's opposition to homosexuality when laws banned discrimination against gays in hiring and firing employees.

— Reuters, Oslo

Bosnia's women seek justice in UK

A group of women from the Bosnian town of Srebrenica is touring Britain in a desperate attempt to put pressure on the international community to bring to justice the Serbs who massacred their menfolk two years ago. "We want to ensure that the tragedy of Srebrenica is not forgotten," the group said in a statement.

The mostly Muslim town was declared a "safe haven" in 1992 by the United Nations, whose peace-keepers disarmed it. In July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces under General Ratko Mladic stormed the town. After he had patted boys on the head and handed out sweets in front of the television cameras, Mladic had the adult male population of the town put to death, about 7,000 in all.

The main task of the women's group, now based in Tuzla, is to find out what happened to the men after they were taken away, to speed up exhumation of mass graves and to lobby for Mladic and other UN-indicted war crim-



Gabrielle Kirk McDonald: To head war-crimes tribunal

inals to be brought before the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

Yesterday it was announced that an American judge, Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, will take over as the tribunal president. Ms McDonald has advocated the institution of a permanent international criminal court.

• The Women of Srebrenica are in Britain until 10 November; details: 0181-4446285.

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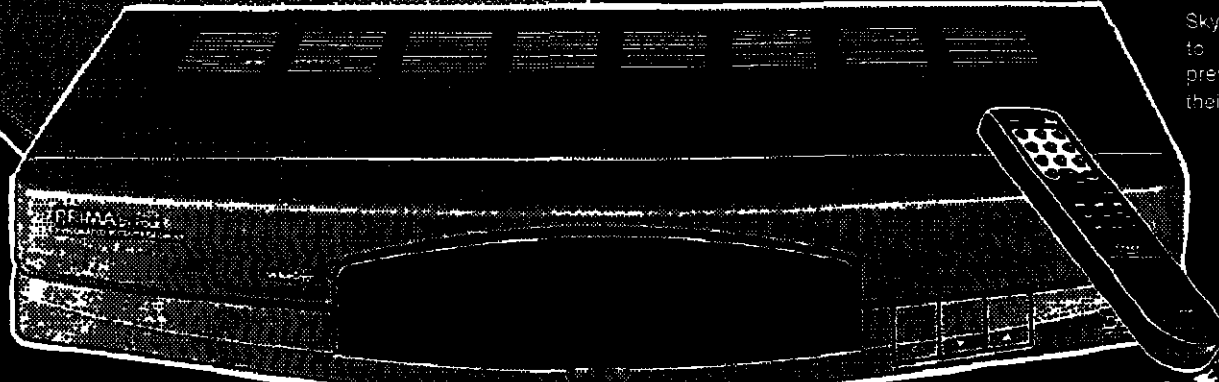
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سكرا من الاصل

Blair sets challenge on party funding

William Hague yesterday came under intense pressure to expose Tory funding details – in confidence – to Sir Patrick Neill's official sleaze committee. Anthony Bevins and Colin Brown report on the Prime Minister's efforts to deflect attention from Formula One.

Tony Blair yesterday urged the Conservative leader to deliver confidential details of Tory fund-raising since 1992 to the official inquiry into party political funding to be held by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, chaired by Sir Patrick.

In Commons exchanges, Mr Hague again pressed the Prime Minister about inconsistencies in the Government line on actual and potential contributions to the Labour Party from the Formula One chief, Bernie Ecclestone.

After Mr Blair had mistakenly told Ann Widdecombe, the Tory backbencher, that Mr Ecclestone's £1m donation had been sent back - when it is not

expected to be returned for some days – the Tories issued a copy of the Government's own Ministerial Code of Conduct.

The code says it is of "paramount importance that ministers give accurate and truthful information to Parliament, correcting any inadvertent error at the earliest opportunity." But the longer-term significance of the exchanges lay in Mr Blair's repeated challenge to Mr Hague that all parties should disclose to Sir Patrick the names of donors, and amounts given over £5,000, back to 1992, when fund-raising began for the 1997 election.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrats' leader, agreed to the principle of the request, but there is no question of Conservative agreement. Mr Hague's office has even denied the existence of one of the party's prime overseas fund-raisers, Ronald Walker, telling *The Independent* that he has not been an overseas treasurer of the party "in living memory".

Mr Walker, a prominent Melbourne businessman and treasurer of the Australian federal Liberal Party, appears on the letter-heading of notepaper used last year by the Conservative and Unionist Central

Office Treasurers' department.

Pressure mounted last night with a Commons motion tabled by Robert Marshall-Andrews

by Robert Matthews and Andrews QC, Labour MP for Medway, calling on the Tory party "to make public the role and fund-raising activities of Ronald Walker on its behalf between 1992-1997." A book about the Liberal takeover of Australia, *The Victory*, says Mr Walker first started fund-raising for the Tories at the end of the 1980s.

"By 1995 his successful efforts led to his appointment as a [Conservative] co-treasurer, and his persuasive skills helped drive down the Tories' debt from £20m in 1993 to nothing by the end of 1995," says the author, Pamela Williams.

Mr Walker, a Grand Prix colleague of Mr Ecclestone's, is said to have raised millions more for the Conservatives in the run-up to the last election, and Mr Hague nominated him for a knighthood soon after he became party leader in June.

A Commons motion tabled by Dale Campbell-Savours, Labour MP for Workington, noted that between 1990-94, Hanson Trust on behalf of Imperial Tobacco gave £500,000 to the Conservative Party.



Foot soldiers: Bob Hughes (right), Labour's candidate in today's Beckenham by-election, and a party supporter canvassing yesterday. Photograph: David Rose

NHS to issue guidance on best treatments

The Government is due to publish its White Paper on the future of the NHS next week. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, reports it will seek to offer fresh hope to some sufferers from stroke, asthma and arthritis.

Doctors are to be advised on the best and most cost-effective treatment for stroke, asthma and arthritis by a new NHS body to be proposed in the health service White Paper due to be published next week.

Ministers are planning to create a national Institute for

Clinical Effectiveness with statutory backing to draw together for the first time guidelines on the best treatment and the most effective medicines. The institute will also advise doctors to use the most cost-effective drugs, rather than to introduce new forms of rationing. They have ruled out cutting treatments from the NHS, such as the insertion of grommets into children's ears, on the grounds that they are not clinically effective, or too expensive.

The aim will be to persuade doctors to prescribe more cheaply to curb the soaring £5bn NHS drugs bill, and it is expected that the initiative could lead to more unbranded, generic drugs being prescribed.

Officials have advised ministers that the institute could help stroke victims by spreading the best practice in rehabilitation. The institute will also advise doctors to improve the training of asthma patients in the use of inhalers, following evidence that some sufferers are not using the equipment properly. Doctors will be advised to prevent unnecessary pain to arthritis sufferers by incorrect prescribing of drugs.

The White Paper will shift the power in the NHS from hospitals to family doctors, who will be told to join locality commissioning groups. They will order health care by commissioning it from the hospitals with money devolved from the health authorities. Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, has said he wants the White Paper to remove the "Berlin walls" between the GPs, hospitals and social services.

Tories in schools policy shift

The Conservatives' championing of increased academic selection in schools, a key commitment in the last election, has been jettisoned, it emerged last night.

In an address to the moderate Conservative Education Association, Stephen Dorrell, the party's education spokesman, made no mention of selection, nor of former prime minister John Major's dream of a grammar school in every town.

Instead, he used his first major policy speech since the party's defeat to signal an intention to drop some unpopular, ideology-driven elements of

past policy in favour of a fresh, more consensual approach.

Giving the RA Butler memorial lecture to the Conservative Education Association at the Carlton Club in London, Mr Dorrell picked up the tone of party leader William Hague in calling for a new start.

Just as Rab Butler, a former Tory education secretary, had ensured that the Conservative Party learnt the lessons of its 1945 defeat and "presented a completely different face to the electorate by 1950", so Mr Hague was rightly stressing "the importance for today's Conservative Party of being

inclusive and forward-looking". As it had after the war, the party shared with Labour a consensus around the principle of state-funded schools and health care. Mr Dornell said

Though Tories should remain sceptical of the Government's move to increase the role of local education authorities in the drive to raise school standards, that did not mean they "must defend every aspect of the structures we introduced; still less that we should instantly commit ourselves to introducing ourselves in every detail", he said.

— *Lucy Ward*

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Minimalists do it on tap and don't mop up afterwards

John Pawson is not just a minimalist; he's the biggest minimalist around, and he's got one of the biggest baths. And what does he think about in his bath? He thinks about future bathrooms. If you go to Birmingham and put on virtual reality glasses, you can see what he has in mind.

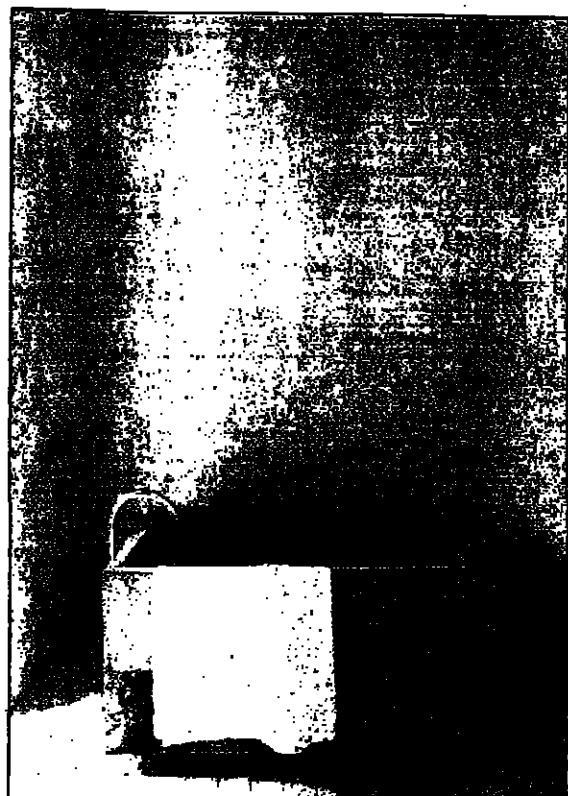
Nonie Niesewand mops up.

People think that minimalism is the equivalent of sensory deprivation. All that emptiness. No beer mats, beaded curtains, soft sofas or toys, squidgy cushions, lava lamps or ashtrays. Everything behind closed doors. Minimalists at home always get asked if they've just moved in, even when they have inhabited their cool white cell for years.

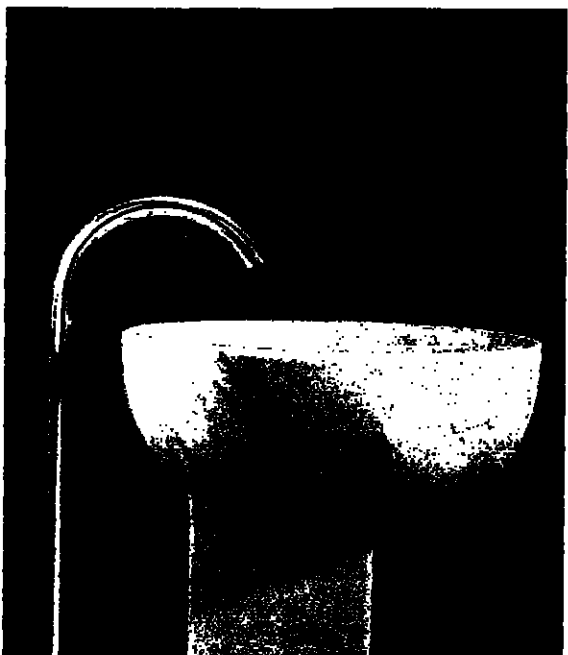
Minimalists love fine details: shadow gaps etched into walls as a fine line instead of skirting boards; plaster as smooth as silk; a pale palette; doors floor-to-ceiling height that click shut as silently as a car door, probably running on the same technology; designer pieces that say "Art". Understatement, but loads of light and space and warmth. They hide their sensuality behind hard exteriors. But don't imagine they give themselves a hard time. They do not, and nowhere does their quest for luxury in plain wrapping show as in the bathroom.

Here we see John Pawson, minimalist-in-chief, in his Notting Hill Gate house (now sold), luxuriating in the bath with wife and children as few of us could (ouch! those taps; oops! that overflow). His marble tub has no discomforts: it conceals a glass-fibre tiled tray so that when four people climb into it, and when the water goes over the side, it falls through chinks in the floor to run into the gutters. It is a fabulous bathroom, but really only a prototype for Pawson bathrooms to come.

From Sunday, you can visit a bathroom Pawson has designed for the year 2020, a place so minimal that it doesn't exist in real time. Yet you can see it at Interbuild in Birmingham and experience bathing in it, fully dressed on the bare stand, wearing a virtual reality helmet. First you enter this seamless stone box, three metres by two metres, through a gap carved in a block of stone, maybe from a meteorite since it's the year 2020. The bath is a plunge pool in the stone floor. A bench lines the windowless wall and the basin carved out of the bench at 40cm height means that you can stand at it, or sit down next to it to splash about. Just water



John Pawson's cedarwood tub in Hester van Royen's apartment, London 1986



The Doris washbasin, carved from a block of white Carrara marble, was designed for Doris Saatchi

Pawson's inspiration was a 16th-century Mogal garden in Kashmir built by Shah Jehan, architect of the Taj Mahal, as well as the waterfall of "Eternal Tears", a piece of hydraulic engineering that resolves itself as a perpetual waterfall.

Basins fill without taps, activated by voice control. Copper pipes under the floor beam up fragrant steam through slits in the slatted stone floor, based on the hammams of north Africa, totally hermetic spaces with a tiny door into which ovens pump steam "and inhabitants escape the cares of the street". It is a lot more energy efficient to use water to heat space rather than air - air conditioning and air heating are hugely wasteful, but simple, responsive plumbing can heat the stone floors as well as pump steam through them.

"My design treats water as a precious commodity, which it will be by then," says John Pawson. It also treats bathing as a ritual, the way that he discovered hot-tub bathing in Japan, where he worked in his twenties. So there are no intrusive taps; valves are voice operated, temperature requirements for different bathes are controlled by hidden computer software and plugs are little swivelling buttons that you press and the air comes whooshing out to seal it tight, the way the Renault 4 pioneered a rudimentary air ventilation system with a rubber button on the dashboard as big as a 10p piece.

"As usual with John's designs, when you start thinking about how to do it, it's difficult to achieve," says Jonnie Bell, Pawson's partner. Pawson is the architect who agonises over light switches lest they interrupt the flow of space in a wall, the author of a pump book called *Minimum*, which he packaged in a plain white cover with its title delicately embossed white on white, and whose favourite holiday destination is the desert. Years ago when John Pawson and I travelled to his hometown, Halifax in Yorkshire, he visibly relaxed past the Watford Gap: "Trees clutter the landscape," he said, though now that he is landscaping gardens in Provence and Long Island with

Jonnie Bell, he doesn't like to be reminded of it. But the trees he likes are often esplanaded or pleached.

As you lie in the bath, still with your virtual reality helmet on, there is a view of the trees outside through a long, glazed, horizontal slit. The clear glass turns opaque when your voice activates its molecular coating, causing them to jiggle out of alignment and cloud the glass. The technology already exists for this glass but at present it has to be activated by an electrical impulse which is why it's called electro-chromic glass.

In the bathroom of 2020 the water drains through the steam slots in the stone floor to be recycled in a reed-bed in the courtyard, cleansed and returned to the water-table. This piece of eco-chic borrowed from the Marsh Arabs is pioneered by the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Wales (01654 702400).

You can take this time-warp journey to the past and into the future on the virtual reality programme designed by Gareth Lane and David Barker of Division Ltd. On stand number 1.830 at Interbuild you will be able to walk into the non-existent bathroom, sit on the bench, or step down the stairs into the bath. By pressing a button on the keyboard, you can fill the basin, empty it, switch on lights and adjust spots, make the glass change from clear to opaque, open and close the skylight, and simulate the shower coming on and off. The reed-bed in the garden correspond-

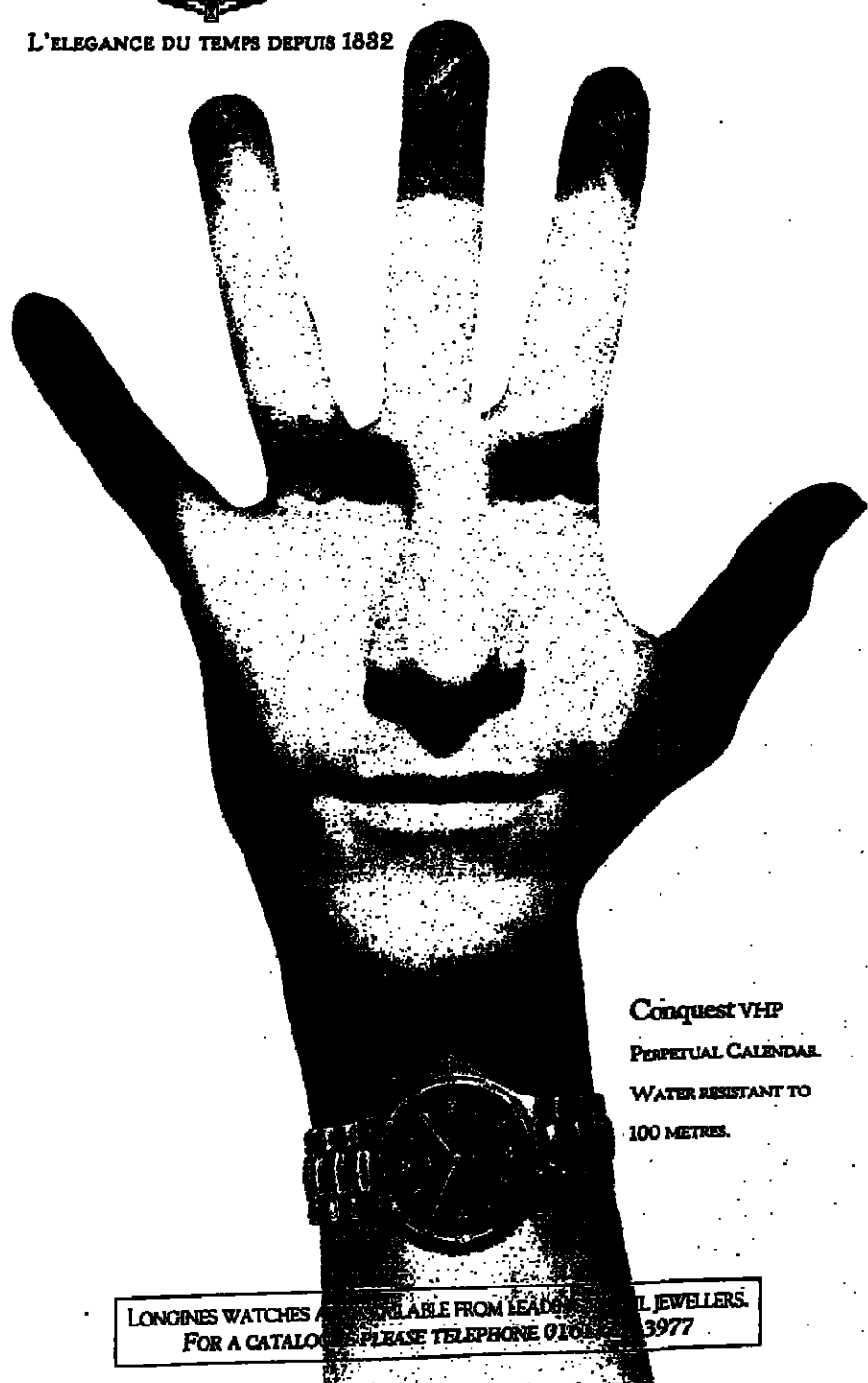
ingly fills at the changes in water levels within. The designers of the virtual reality programme thought the bathroom was "a bit bland really", so they put in a towel and a couple of cans of deodorant, "things to pick up and play with if you want", and at a key press, let you change the surfaces from the rock specified to sandstone, pink marble or granite.

Interbuild, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham (01203 426 508) from Sunday to 28 Nov

Want to save water? Bathe en famille: John and Catherine Pawson luxuriate in the deceptively simple deep-soak bath with young Benedict and Caius. The hard surfaces hide a lot of technology. Photograph: Cindy Palmato

LONGINES

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National Architecture Week begins today...

An Arts Council and Royal British Institute of Architects initiative, of over 150 events, will take place around the country.

Nationwide: For list of practices opening their offices ring Architectural Week Hotline (0171-490 5969); call Architect in the House (0845 603 8508) to consult one of the 1,200 architectural practices taking part to suggest ways in which house-holders can improve their homes, for a fee of £10 donated to Shelter; BBC Radio 3 Designs for Living, 9.30pm, 24-28 Nov, visits 20th-century houses.

Eastern: Exhibition of work by RIBA Eastern Region 20-30 Nov, Architecture Gallery, 6, King's Parade, Cambridge; Collection of award-winning contemporary buildings in "Campus Trail & Talk" at Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia, 20-27 Nov (closed Mon).

London: Prince of Wales Institute of Architecture Open Day, 29 Nov, 10am-4pm at 14 Gloucester Gate London NW1; Six STARchitect Talks (pre-booking essential): 1. Reflections of Soane at the Soane Museum, Lincoln Inn Fields - Charles Jencks, 20 Nov midday; Edward Cullinan, 25 Nov 6.30pm; Richard MacCormac, 26 Nov 6.30pm (0171-405 2107); 2. Zaha Hadid, 25 Nov 6.30pm, at the AA Bedford Square, WCI (0171-887 4039); 3. Jonathan Meades, 26 Nov 6.30pm at the Sainsbury Wing, National Gallery, Trafalgar

Square (0171-916 7380); 4. Piers Gough, 26 Nov 2pm, for secondary school children, at RIBA, Portland Place (0171-580 5533); 5. The Modern House Series at the Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, EC1 (0171-250 3857) - Jeremy Gould "The modern house 1919-39"; 26 Nov 6.30 pm; Michael Manser "The modern post-war house" 27 Nov 6.30 pm; 6. Jasper Morrison, 25 Nov 6.30pm, RIBA, Portland Place (0171-251 0791).

Northern: Public debate on Baltic Flour Mills, 26 Nov 6-8pm (booking essential: Anna Pepperall, Gateshead Council 0191-477 3478).

North West: Three STARchitect talks - booking essential: Adrian Williams of Richard Rogers Partnership, 20 Nov 7.30pm in Preston (0161-973 1505); (0151-709 8832) for Jonathan Falkingham of Urban Splash 24 Nov 5.30pm-6.30pm William Alsop 25 Nov 6.30pm.

West Midlands: STARchitect talk Terry Farrell 24 Nov 6.30pm at Newman Tonks Design Centre, Birmingham Business Park (0121-717 7777); Interbuild at NEC Birmingham 23-28 Nov 9.30am-6 pm.

Yorkshire & Humberside: STARchitect talk Nigel Coates, 24 Nov 6.30pm, Showroom Cinema, Sheffield (0114-275 7727); "Architecture on the Move" mobile multi-media event 20-27 Nov for locations around Sheffield (Prue Chiles on 0114-268 4282).

Southern: STARchitect talks Adrian Gibson and Robert Kilm at Hertford Castle, 26 Nov 7 pm (01707-875 253); "Learning Spaces" at de Montfort University, Milton Keynes explores virtual and real space, 20-27 Nov, £45 (01908 695 511).

South-east: Ring RIBA South East for events (Jenny Peterson on 01892 515 878).

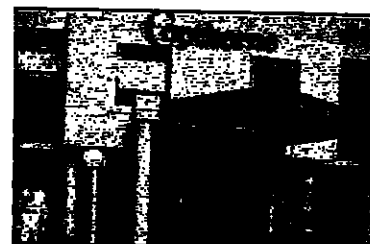
Scotland: Symposium on the New Scottish Parliament, 28 Nov 10am-5pm, 29 Nov 10am-1pm at the Matthew Architecture Gallery, Edinburgh (Clive Albert on 0131-650 2306); two Glasgow STARchitect talks (booking essential 0141-227 1999) Charles McKean at Caledonian University "Is Glasgow well dressed or wearing cast-offs?" 20 Nov 6.30pm; Gavin Stamp on Alexander Thomson at Waterstones in Sauchiehall Street, 26 Nov 6pm; Scottish Houses exhibition of contemporary houses at Dundee Central Library, 20-27 Nov.

Northern Ireland: "Modern Architecture in Belfast is a Thing of the Past" debate at Queens University, Belfast, 21 Nov (01232 323760).

Channel Islands: "Jersey Open Buildings" - the National Trust buildings of Jersey, 20-27 Nov (Jeremy Barnes on 01534 33100); RIBA Award-winner Jersey College for Girls Preparatory School opens its doors, 22-23 Nov (Dot Browning on 01962 842 200).

THE INDEPENDENT

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The child abuse challenge: to transform the culture of care



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Sir Bill Utting's report, published yesterday, is a record of unforgivable misery. But before tackling its recommendations, it is worth saying that the recent history of child care has been a great success. There is less of it. Fewer children are being taken into care by social services – between the early Eighties and the early Nineties the number fell by 40 per cent, and among those the numbers accommodated in children's residential homes has shrunk even more dramatically. Of children taken into care, a high proportion are found foster homes. Social work practice is, sometimes, perverted by political correctness of a kind which is blind to the best interests of an individual child. But by and large a lot of dedicated effort by professionals and foster parents provides a reasonable simulacrum of family life for many damaged children.

All that needs to be recognised and prized. Breakdowns, such as the recent case in Peterborough, for which Cambridgeshire social services were heavily criticised, punctuate that history, it's true. But victims of failed procedure or professional negligence, from Jasmine Beckford onwards, have provided lessons which have generally been learnt. Except, it seems, in that archipelago of exploitation made up by small, badly regulated local authority children's homes of which Clwyd County Council's stand as a recent proxy. Our reports about them 18 months ago were only the latest disclosures about a sector of social care which seems especially cursed.

And yet, using emotive language like that won't do. The problem of caring for the relatively small number of children who need to be accommodated by the state is a problem of organisation. And the greatest disappointment we register in Sir William Utting's study is that he – too much, perhaps, a doyen of the present system – has not thought radically enough about the management changes demanded in response to the catalogue of failure that he doggedly records.

The problem, let it be clearly recognised, is not primarily one of money. It is how the money is spent and results monitored. Utting notes that elementary record-keeping has been woefully inadequate; if not, how could so many children for whom the local authority stands in loco parentis just "go missing"?

Child abuse in local authority homes is a classic instance of a service supplier (the council) failing to build reliable mechanisms to monitor its own performance. It was to prevent just such a conflict of interest, in health and other council services, "providers" and "purchasers" were split in the Eighties: that was one of the great Tory public sector reforms. The split does not have to be mechanistic, nor does it necessarily involve privatisation or contracting out. It does involve a director of social service being able to stand figuratively outside the children's home and rap on its windows demanding to be assured that the terms of its contract are being punctiliously fulfilled. Is local government even capable of administering a social service as difficult as child care? Sir William might have posed that question less tentatively. Child abuse scandals surely point in another direction – towards reliable, uniform standards, guarantees against abuse and perversion of the process of child care. In other words, towards some country-wide institution stronger even than Utting's proposed national council (which might consider promoting an equivalent of prison visitors, in other words some lay participation in the business of looking and listening).

Inquiring into the abuse of children is like looking in a rearview mirror in which a horror story plays out. It happened then, in the past, but now – official voices have been too swift to assure – things are different, procedures have been tightened, inspection has been regularised and the children are listened to. But Utting proves previous such assurances were false. Before he reported, the necessary scheme of reform was well enough known, from systematic inspection to registration of staff.

The problems were equally apparent: to work in residential institutions with children requires from staff a certain temperament and character, possibly including qualities which potential abusers have in abundance. What is wanted now is a guarantee that reform will be implemented – a clear commitment by the Social Services Inspectorate, the Local Government Association, whoever it takes, that if abuse takes place in future (it would be utopian to rule that out) it happens in spite of the system not because of it.

Ironically, Sir William's was not the only report on children and young people published yesterday. By chance the Home Office produced a study of prisons for young offenders. It ought, at least, to remind us that the roots of delinquency and crime lie in childhood. Police and prisons come late into the game. The point in incarcerating child care is not just to eliminate abuse; it is to try to give damaged children a break. Or at least prevent further deterioration in their prospects for life.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number. Fax 0171 293 2036; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LETTERS

The blame for Luxor

Sir: Despicable as terrorist attacks on innocent people are, the blame has to be squarely put on the Egyptian government.

Egyptians used to pride themselves on one of the most equal distributions of income and most comprehensive social security nets among developing countries, and popular opinion sees the years of the 1950s and 60s under President Nasser, who dispossessed the feudal elite, as golden years.

Of course there came the time when the country did not seem to be able to afford all that. With the advent of Sadat populist policies were firmly driven back, and soon the old feudal families re-emerged as rulers of the country.

The current regime under President Mubarak entered the stage after the assassination of Sadat in 1981 with a good reputation. Mubarak is an Air Force officer from a modest background and was hailed for his integrity, unlike the alleged corruption of Sadat and his cronies. Things have changed since then.

The international financial community is increasingly happy with the state of affairs. A structural adjustment programme devised with the help of the World Bank and the IMF has put the country on the map of international portfolio investment as labour regulations, social security and government redistribution policies have given way to shareholder value. The majority of the people do not participate in the boom.

The Muslim Brotherhood was the only big opposition movement in an otherwise thoroughly undemocratic country. It ran schools and social services the government could no longer provide. And it was a home for moderate Islamic opposition. Until two years ago that is, when the leaders were arrested and the whole movement closed down.

Close down a populist movement, and the more active members will go underground. The strongarm tactics of a succession of interior ministers and state security chiefs (the latter are promoted to the former, as happened again this week) create martyrs and do not solve anything.

ULRICH BARTSCH
Oxford

Tobacco battle

Sir: Your headline "Lung cancer toll worsened by attitudes" (18 November) with the suggestion that anti-smoking campaigns add to the sufferings of smokers, distracts attention from the fact that their sufferings are caused by the tobacco industry, aided by the press, the advertising industry and governments which surrender to its financial power.

We have known for more than 40 years that cigarette smoking is the cause of the worldwide increase in deaths from lung cancer which followed the spread of this habit. As long ago as January 1953 the British public was informed of this in a BBC television programme in which I took part. Rational application of this knowledge could have led to dramatic reduction in new cases of lung cancer, but because of failure of appropriate action

by individuals and by governments, this had not occurred.

Nevertheless, we must not despair, but continue to publicise the fact that smoking greatly increases the risks of lung cancer, and of some other common lung and heart diseases. Are we to desist from this effort on the specious excuse that we must spare the feelings of those affected by smoking-induced diseases? In my book, this would be another surrender to market forces of course, to the benefit of the tobacco industry and its hangers-on.

Professor J G SCADDING
Beaconsfield,
Buckinghamshire

Sir: Richard Evans (letter, 17 November) cites California as an example of "American-style" bans on smoking. California is the one state that most Americans wouldn't refer to as the norm for almost anything. This is the state that stops

people at its borders to confiscate "foreign" fruits and plants to prevent unwanted insects from infecting local plants. Nobody has been able to explain to me how they prevent these insects from flying across the border on their own.

Outsiders commonly refer to California as "the land of fruits and nuts".
DAVID McNICKLE
St Albans, Hertfordshire
The writer is from Cleveland, Ohio

Proof against pain

Sir: Your report (18 November) on research that suggests that nature rather than nature is responsible for the variation in people's pain thresholds.

Years ago I lived in Montreal, when French Canadians were still famous for producing large families. Ten or more children was common. My dentist there told me he could al-

ways tell whether a woman patient had been the eldest daughter in her family. The eldest daughter, he said, did not feel pain that would have others howling.

He attributed this to the fact that they were bred to be concerned and responsible for others, to the exclusion of self, from a very tender age.
MARJORIE HEATH
Hopton, Norfolk

Aggressive beggars

Sir: In his zeal to lay the death of a homeless person at the door of the Edinburgh Evening News and The Scotsman, Patrick Small (Media, 17 November) forgets one or two facts.

The Evening News campaign against aggressive begging is in tandem with our support for a wet hostel in Edinburgh to provide just the kind of care for those addicted to drugs and alcohol he mentions.

Aggressive begging is not rare. Lothian and Borders police have identified a hard core of approximately 30 who regularly cause trouble in the city centre. It is true that behaviour has improved since our campaign was launched.

I have lost count of the number of times we have insisted that aggressive begging and homelessness are separate issues.

Andrew Neil has never written a line for this paper. Our interest in aggressive begging predates Mr Neil's joining the company.

I agree with Mr Small that it is shameful for some to feel the need to beg, but I fail to see why it should be deemed acceptable for ordinary people to be harassed as they go about their daily business in this city.
JOHN McLELLAN
Editor
Edinburgh Evening News
Edinburgh

Car propaganda

Sir: One aspect of the Formula One affair does not seem to have been commented on: at a time when all environmentally aware people are trying to think of ways to counter the car crisis, it is unwise of the British Prime Minister to be seen to embrace the top propaganda sport of the motor industry.
Professor G V R BORN
London EC1

Sir: Richard Branson (letter, 17 November) says he pledged to set up a "rival sport" to Formula One should the teams withdraw from Britain in the wake of a tobacco sponsorship ban. Presumably he would stand to gain financially if this were to happen. Therefore he is no longer in a position to give impartial advice to the Government on this issue.
ADRIAN STRONG
Bedley, Kent

State of policing

Sir: Like David Turner (letter, 18 November) I was subject to police questioning and search under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice Act while attending a demonstration last Sunday at a farm in Oxfordshire which breeds cats for vivisection.

All demonstrators were stopped on arrival and told they would not be allowed to use a public footpath unless they had a slip of paper showing they had been searched. Luckily we knew not to give names and addresses. We were photographed and videoed throughout the day.

After the demonstration our coach, which contained mostly middle-aged and elderly people, was stopped as we tried to leave for home. Officers boarded and told us we would have to be searched, but after protests and threats of legal action from several of us they chose just to look at our previously issued slips of paper. However, the video team moved down the coach, turning people's heads and lifting their jackets if they tried to avoid being filmed.

This is the state of policing in Britain today.
SUSAN DICKENS
Hove, East Sussex

Veterans in Burma

Sir: Where does the Remembrance Day poppy money go (Letters, 11, 14, 19 November)? I wrote recently to the British Legion about their advertising of holidays in Burma while that country's elected leader is under house arrest. Their reply was simply: "We have no intention of not organising holidays in Burma."

RA COOPER
Ludwell, Wiltshire

Mobile menace

Sir: I was reading a noticeboard in Hammersmith Road in London when I was run into by a woman who was driving a motorised wheelchair while engaged in conversation on her mobile phone (a conversation she continued while I was picking myself up from the ground).

If the Government plans to prevent use of mobile phones by road users, is there any chance they could extend it to other forms of transport?
RICHARD BARTLE
West Bergholt, Essex

You shall go to the ball – but don't expect to live happily ever after



MILES KINGTON

As the pantomime season is approaching again, I want to tell you a true story.

Two years ago my wife and I were invited to a charity dinner in the Guildhall in Bath. It had been arranged by a local restaurant tycoon called Ahmed Chowdhury, who was raising funds for a hospital back in Bangladesh, and although I do not attend many charity events, being a mean-minded and suspicious person, there must have been some reason why we decided to go to this particular one. Perhaps it was the influence of my wife, who is a warm-hearted and generous person.

We found ourselves seated at a large round table where all the seats were taken but two.

These were empty, explained Mr Chowdhury to us, because they were expecting the two stars from the local pantomime to come along after the performance and grace at least the pudding course with their presence. The pantomime referred to was the one at the Bath Theatre Royal, which my wife and I had not been to see, on the grounds that the one at the Bristol Old Vic is usually better value.

I don't mean by this that Bristol is better value than Bath, necessarily, but that the Bristol Old Vic panto is a genuine local product, usually devised by local performer and top-class panto dame Chris Harris, and full of old-fashioned sight gags, digs at the Welsh and

other local jokes rather than references to TV. If you want TV references and guest celebrities, you can always go to the Bristol Hippodrome or Bath Theatre Royal, where most of the parts are played by people I have never heard of from TV sitcoms, or, even worse, people I have heard of. One year recently in Bath they got Rolf Harris to play Buttons. They got him about 30 years too late.

Another year in Bristol they hired Frank Bruno to play Robin Hood. I am all in favour of casting against race, but casting against talent is another thing even if it did lead to the best line in the show, when one of the Merrie Men reacted to the approach of danger by saying: "Now is the time to act,

Robin!" and Frank Bruno said, "Don't look at me, then."

Well, the prince and the princess did show up eventually, and a nice young pair they were too. You might expect them to keep their distance from each other out of working hours, but I am told by actors that love on-stage is very often followed by romance off-stage as well, and what was charming was that the two of them had obviously fallen in love during the course of the show.

He was a young English actor I had never heard of. She was a young Australian actress who had made a name for herself in *Neighbours*, though what the name she had made for herself was I cannot tell you

as I have never seen *Neighbours*. But I know they were in love because he told me so and she nodded happily in agreement. "After the show has ended we're going round the world together," he said. "We're just going to take off and hold hands round the world."

She nodded happily again and said this was so, and they were going to be happy for ever and ever. I said that falling in love during the run of a pantomime was not the best basis for lifelong happiness and that when the greasepaint had worn off and the happy cries of the matinee audiences had faded, it might be a different matter. They assured me that it was not so, and said they were so sure that it was the real thing that

one day they would come back together and prove it.

Well, time passed. The dinner came to an end. The panto came to the end of its run some time well into the next year. Winter turned to spring. Bath rugby team got to Twickenham yet again for the Cup Final and we got a postcard from Heidelberg in Germany saying: "The fairy tale is still alive and well and we are both very happy", signed The Prince and The Princess. For a moment I couldn't think what this meant, as the style didn't sound like that of any of my friends, but my wife remembered the care-less words of the pantomime prince, who had indeed taken our address, and deduced that he had kept his promise, as you

would expect a prince to do.

Thereafter we got postcards at lengthy but regular intervals, about once every five months: One from France, I think. One from Italy. One from the other side of the world somewhere. There were always signed The Prince and The Princess. There was never any name or address, so there was never any way of replying or congratulating them.

We got the last one a month or two back, from California.

It was signed just by The Prince this time.

It said: "The fairy tale is over."

Nothing else. Sad, I suppose. But the fairy tale had lasted a lot longer than any pantomime ever does.

21/COMMENT

'In My Own Words' - Van, minus the Man

JOHN WALSH



life in this book." (In an autobiography?) I should bloody well think not. "Next thing you know," sniffs one disappointed bidder, "he'll say he doesn't want to discuss his music either."

Those imminently involved in buying wedding gifts will surely look with interest at the 50th anniversary today of, not just the nuptials of the Queen and Prince Philip, but the list of presents bought for them by 2,500 thoughtful subjects. They make fascinating reading today. They range in scale and appeal from "a cinema" (thanks to the Earl and Countess Mountbatten) to "a hand-made plastic belt" (thanks a bunch, Mr and Mrs D Flood). Many writers kindly sent books, sometimes their own: *You and the Jury* by Miss Virginia Mather was probably a welcome choice, as was *I Remember the Emersons* by Miss M M Engel. The elaborately named Mrs C St Aubyn Ratcliffe thoughtfully sent two copies of her *Fluffy Folk and Fairies*, so the future Duke didn't have to read it over his wife's shoulder in the royal bedchamber. Handbags were a popular choice, running the gamut from straw to tooled leather, pigskin, crocodile and suede to the jewel-mounted, gold-mesh thingy from Contessa Marcella Gianotti. Lots of people sent stockings, sheer nylon ones rather than old-fashioned silk. Mr and Mrs Fred Grote, perhaps suspecting that someone else might have thought of their idea, sent three pairs.

The RAF slung the happy couple a cheque "for the Princess Elizabeth's own use" and threw in a Steinway grand piano. Two young subjects, Miss Jill and Master Jeremy Cotton, decided a dart board would be just the thing. Two district nurses from Corsham, Wilts, sent a Siamese kitten. And for some reason the silliest gifts were sent by people with silly names. Mrs Bapsy Parvy sent a two-handled soup tureen, while a "hurricane pipe", so useful in the tropical climes of Buckingham Palace, was the choice of Mr N Y Nutt. But you can imagine the Duke of Edinburgh having more fun with any of the above than writing a thank-you letter beginning, "Dear Mrs Kownaka and Mrs Bialous, Thank you for the two dolls dressed to resemble myself and Princess Elizabeth..."

Thirty-three years after his death, Brendan Behan is making waves again this weekend. The new Taoiseach, Bertie Aherne, will be at the launch in Dublin tonight of a biography of the late playwright and celebrity drinker. Michael O'Sullivan's book *Brendan Behan: A Life* claims, *inter alia*, that he fathered two hitherto unknown children, one allegedly on an ex-mistress of Ernest Hemingway in the early 1960s. (The existence of a Behan-Hemingway connection somewhere is enough to bring a sparkle to the eyes of the world's barmen.) At the same moment, it seems, Behan was also in the throes of a homosexual affair, if you believe the revelations by one Peter Arthur, a former sailor and boxer, who wrote about his manly couplings with Behan in 1981, but has never had his confessions published on this side of the Atlantic. Things will come to a head on Saturday, when the biographer, the former rent boy and three of Behan's family - brothers Brian and Seamus, and sister Carmel - meet on the Pat Kenny chat show.

Brian Behan is a staunch fan of his legendary brother (he's got a one-man show called *Behan Ain't Misbehavin'* at Kilburn's Tricycle Theatre this weekend) but has sharply divergent views about the great man's sexual orientation. "My brother had a strained foreskin," he reports, "and had to have an operation in America. And after it, in my view, he was quite unequipped for sex. So I don't believe any of it." And before America? "Brendan did say once," confesses Behan *minimus*, "that if it was a choice between Michelangelo's David and Whistler's *Mother* - well, there'd be no contest..." Golly. Behan gay, straight and impotent. Where can I get a video?

The ghost of real politics stalk a silent, disregarded palace



ANDREW MARR
WESTMINSTER
SLUMBERS

I've always been enjoyably haunted by that scene in *Dr Zhivago* where they scramble back into the shuttered, deserted and winter-bound country house, marooned and ghostly. Once, chasing a story, I came across, without intending to, a boarding school I attended in a similar state - shuttered windows, well-remembered classrooms slimy with mould, the drive vanished under moss, dripping silence everywhere.

And now, again, this week, a third echo of loss and abandonment; though the architecture is in rather better repair. Long, empty corridors; silent, darkened rooms; cavernous, ill-lit hallways, where once there was laughter, argument and noise. Muffled and ghostly voices from a chamber. A pervasive sense of decrepitude, defeat and memorial slumber.

None of which may be of much consequence, except that I was in the House of Commons. Wander around the Mother of Parliaments any evening and you would conclude that the place has been shut down; that it's an institutional husk, a museum. The lobbies, bars and corridors which, in the 1980s, were crammed with plotting Members, backs and hangings-on, seem silent and mournful. Officials can be found in odd corners, murmuring about the old days, like abandoned retainers. In the Commons chamber itself a few MPs can be found too, mulling mostly to themselves. Miss Havisham-like. A wreck of a place, I assure you.

This is, granted, an evening scene. The Commons is busier earlier in the day and shouldn't, in any case, continue the ridiculously late night sittings which were once the norm. But the depopulation of the palace by early evening is eloquent of a bigger truth, which is that our Parliament is barely surviving Tony Blair's majority of 179.

Once, in pretty recent memory, there was a Chamber, if not of Horrors, then at least of big and active beasts. There was Michael Foot, squinting and poised; Enoch Powell, grimly free of illusions and comforts; Denis Healey; Margaret Thatcher; Callaghan; Benn; Heseltine with hunger in his eye.

They were the last generation of post-war ideological politicians and the left-right divide sliced down the middle of the Commons. A real struggle was taking place about the or-



ganisation of society, which had real consequences outside. It was a global argument; and they were the British players; and it mattered. Neil Kinnock's white-faced anger about Nigel Lawson or Thatcher was unaffected. The Tory celebrations during those Budgets that ratcheted socialism away were authentically triumphal.

Not only was there a grand moral plot, there was, for much of the time, a certain degree of day-to-day uncertainty and suspense built into it - cabinet-splitting arguments, sudden resignations, "will they survive this one?" cliffhanger votes - all the blood and screaming of a good, old-fashioned melodrama. There were big characters, big themes and fast, racy chapters. There was, in short, a story.

Now, with the abolition of ideology, we have caring Tories and fiercely pro-business New Labourites. The line down the chamber has wavered and been partly rubbed out. The Government is inclusive. The Opposition is barely articulate, still winded, sitting on its bottom and rubbing its eyes. William Hague declares that the Conservative Party is back in the fight. But it doesn't, so far, agree.

I am not suggesting that the Commons was simply switched off on 2 May 1997. There are trends here which have been discussed for years. There is the rise of the TV studio as a more intimate and easily-controlled alternative to the Chamber - witness the Prime Minister's apology over the Ecclestone affair, which was welcome, but might have been even more so had it been made mid-week to Parliament, and not on a

Sunday to John Humphrys.

There's the disappearance of gallery reporting in newspapers, which journalists tend to regard as a reaction to Parliamentary decline, and MPs see as a prime cause of it. There's the tight grip over New Labour dissent by the whips, no different in essence from whipping by previous governments, but more controlled, with radio-pagers, days off and so on.

But, ultimately, Parliament seems so dull just now because of the lack of tension - that damned great majority - the lack of surprise, and the fact that the Government likes it that way. This is an administration of sleeve-rolled doors, impatient to get moving in Whitehall and less sentimental about Parliamentary tradition. Labour ministers, who spent years watching the antics in the Chamber with impatient irritation, have no time to mourn its passing now.

Yet without an active, challenging and unpredictable Parliament, any government is bound to get too easy a ride. There won't be the stomach-knot of tension in ministers waiting to be challenged; so they will become slacker or more arrogant than they would have been. Many backbenchers, failing to make a difference, will become discouraged and give up. Ill-considered bills will slip through, though admittedly they always have so slipped.

At this point in the argument there are a couple of "government by Prime Ministerial dictatorship - threat to democracy - Lord Hailsham vindicated" paragraphs that any adequately-trained columnist inserts pretty automatically. But I am

enough of a chirpy optimist to think politics, with all its drama and tension, will reassert itself. Loyal Blair backbenchers will become bored and unpredictable. Personality and policy clashes will create their own theatricals in due course.

More important, though, we are probably in a period of political transition, from the politics of left-right to the politics of Europe-national. Mr Hague has been given a thorough kicking, not least by this newspaper, for embracing anti-EU politics and therefore - unless monetary union quickly collapses - consigning himself to certain defeat. I'm still convinced that, with business backing, there will be a pro-EMU majority by the time it matters and the nationalist crusade is romantic.

But in a short-term way, Hague may be right, in that he will unite a considerable section of the country behind him and achieve exactly the definition

that the Tories have lacked during the early phase of Blairism. He might lose the next election by less than otherwise.

And - here's the crux of it - in doing so, he will be repainting that line down the centre of the chamber, driving Tory Europeanists towards Labour and the Liberal Democrats, but tugging at the loyalties of leftist anti-federalists. A remaking of party politics, and the return of a Great Argument to Westminster is not only possible but even likely by the year 2000.

Tory sceptics are certainly right to point out that devolution and monetary union are likely to undermine the importance of Westminster further - though there is a huge job remaining for a reformed House of Commons. But it is a rich, choice and resonant irony that the place will come alive again only once the debate is joined on the policies which could silence it for good.

Barbie: from career woman to bimbo in a generation

LOUISE LEVENE
SEX AND THE SINGLE TOY

November would not be complete without a seasonal outburst of toy stories. Just when it looked as if this year's PR roseette would go to the Teleubbies (on offer at £100 a piece in the small ads of *Loot*), Mattel weighs in with the obligatory Barbie shocker. This time it's the all-new, smaller-breasted, thicker-waisted doll due to be launched next year. The implication is that the multinational toy giant is doing its bit for feminism by dumping the impossibly pneumatic old Barbie in favour of a new one - but

read the small print and it transpires that this is merely a cynical bit of niche marketing aimed at collectors, completists and that lunatic fringe of parents who won't give the little bottle-blondie tart houserom. In fact the bulk of the trade will involve the old-style, waspy-waisted nymphette and most outfits will continue to be tailored to her fantastical proportions. Imagine the scenes of humiliation in the dolls' changing room as New Barbie discovers that she can't get the shocking pink Capri pants over her sadly realistic buttocks. Does my bum look big in this?

But nine-inch dolls are only part of the picture. Although she doesn't actually appear on crisp packets, Barbie could certainly teach Simon Fuller a thing or two about merchandising. Barbie's empire includes wallpaper, pyjamas, duvet covers, condoms (only kidding), Barbie's long-standing global

success may be responsible for the fact that children's toys are more gender-specific than they were 40 years ago.

If you were packed off today to Woolworths to buy a toy for a six-year-old whose sex you didn't know, you might find that the only thing suitable was a bag of sweets. The sexual stereotyping of toys is now so universal that you can no longer buy a simple jigsaw puzzle: it has to be a Barbie puzzle or a Batman puzzle. The manufacturers' ruthless genderification of toy production has been allowed to proceed unchecked by feminism or common sense until we have reached a stage where everything from a pencil case to a tricycle is indelibly marked with the sex for which it was designed.

We may believe that all this was true only in the bad old past when the pink-or-blue paraphernalia of childhood was largely responsible for old-style



'Busy Gal' Barbie in 1960, and today's Dream Slag

sexual conditioning. Janet helped mother in the kitchen, John helped daddy wash the car. But in fact the polarisation of child's play was not as extreme as it is today. Boys might have had their train set and girls played with dolls that peed everywhere, but at least they shared the same rollerskates.

The Sixties and Seventies saw an increased interest in the exciting modern idea of unisex playthings, but the trend didn't take over. Rather, boys' toys have progressed from cowboy outfits to combat fatigues and laser-sighted rifles, and Barbie has slid down the slippery primrose path into the dolly equivalent of white slavery. Once a pretty brunette who enjoyed a lively, self-sufficient existence with snappy, street-smart outfits and a full diary, Barbie has degenerated into a materialistic trollope whose clothes and accessories makes Barbara Cartland look like Jean Muir at a funeral.

The Barbie people always insist that her career is terribly important to her in an "I want to travel and meet people" sort of way but the wardrobe tells another story. The "career girl" has gone forever; instead Nineties Barbie is a kept woman with no shame and no taste. Run your eye down the Barbie wish-list

and ask yourself what self-respecting female ever paid good money for a shocking pink horse box? The faithful Ken is just a blind: Mattel should really team up with Peter Stringfellow and launch a sugar daddy.

Do toys matter? Surely it's a fine and necessary thing that girls and boys should be different? Maybe, but not if we push them both to ugly extremes of brutality and air-headedness. There is more to role-playing games than deciding which sarong to wear in the speedboat. Two generations into the sexual revolution and grown women are still reading magazines that promise to make them slimmer, prettier, sexier, Barbier. It all has to start somewhere. The bimbofication of Barbie has seen her degenerate from the Busy Girl of 1960 to the Rainbow Dream Slag of 1997 that line the shelves this Christmas: this is more than just a toy story.

Bulgaria in Crisis

Appeal to Independent Readers

LEFT TO FREEZE
Yordan, 14, already malnourished could die from cold and hunger this winter unless aid reaches him now. With temperatures plummeting to -15°C Yordan's scant clothing and no shoes offer him little protection from the bitter cold and there is no money to heat his orphanage. There are 37,000 places in Bulgaria's orphanages.



No Money To Feed The Children No Money To Heat The Orphanages

Bulgaria is a country in the midst of a serious economic crisis. Unless urgent help is sent, thousands of children will suffer terribly this winter.

There is little money to heat the orphanages. Orphanage Directors are having to beg for food from local villages and rarely know where the next meal is coming from. In some areas children, like Yordan, are going hungry and the cold could prove fatal for many children this winter. Without aid this could be catastrophic for Bulgaria's orphanage children.

The European Children's Trust, sister charity of The Romanian Orphanage Trust, is ready to distribute emergency food packs, clothes and fuel to the orphanages in most need.

Your gift today will save lives and bring hope.

£250 could buy enough emergency food packs to feed 20 orphanage children for a week or heat an orphanage for 3 days.

Please send whatever you can to help children survive the winter or call 01273 299399 NOW

I enclose £ to save Bulgarian orphanage children. Cheques to The European Children's Trust. Or debit my Access/Visa/CAF card

Card no. Expiry date

Signature Date

Mr/Mrs/Ms

Address

Postcode

Telephone no.

Return to: Tanya Barron, (ID6), Jasta Emergency

Appeal, The European Child - c/o Trust, FREEPOST

KE359, 644 Queen Street, 1/c, IDON, SC49 4AR or call

01273 299399 NOW. Registered Charity No. 1046757

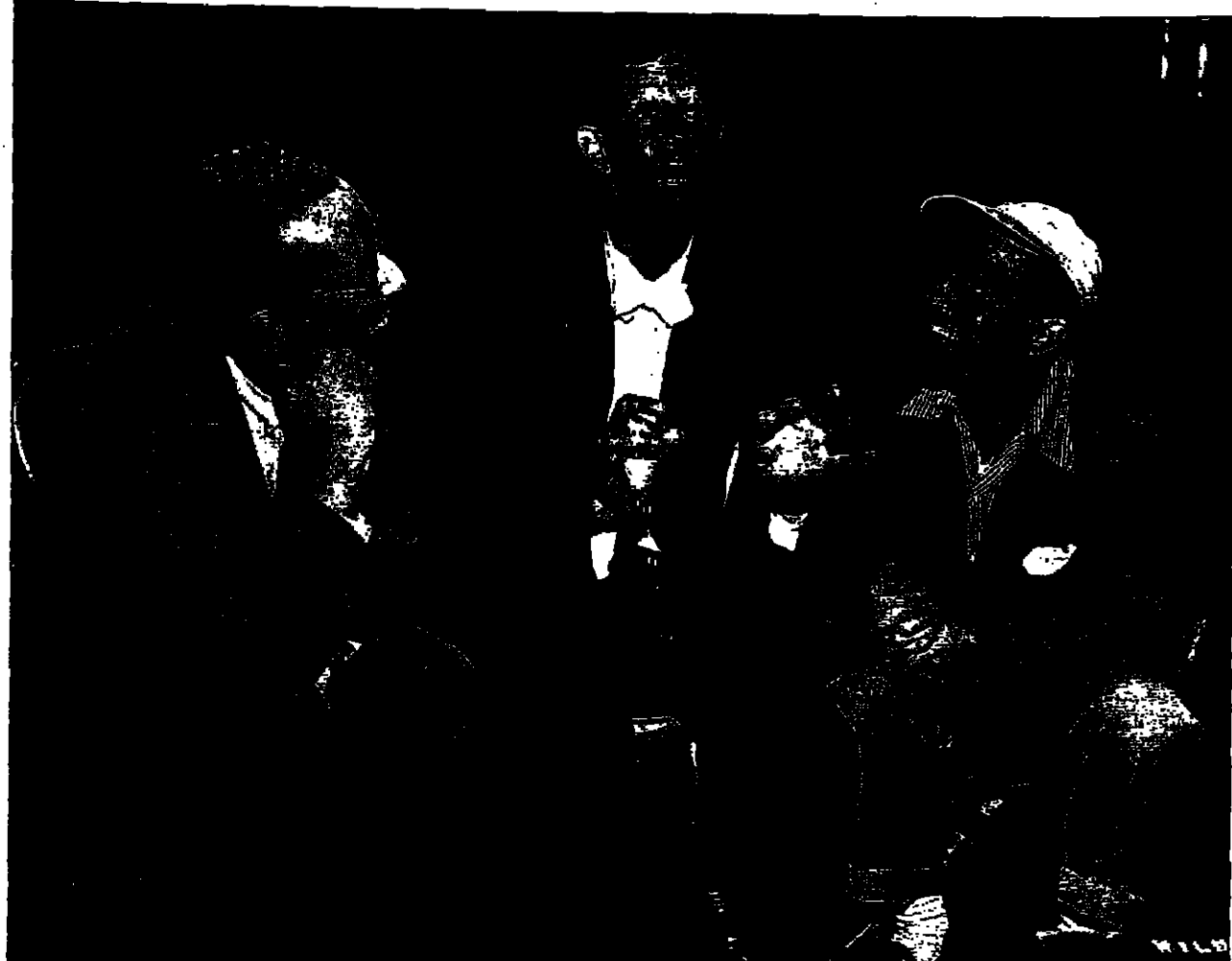
Please act NOW - winter is coming

Saul Chaplin

Saul Kaplan (Saul Chaplin), composer, arranger and producer: born New York 19 February 1912; married Ethel Schwartz (one daughter); marriage dissolved 1949; 1968 Betty Levin died Los Angeles 15 November 1977.

Though Saul Chaplin was a notable composer and film producer, it was his work as an arranger and music supervisor that made him a key figure of the Hollywood musical. "He's one of those fellows behind the scenes that has made so many fine musicals work," said Gene Kelly. Among the films Chaplin scored were three for which he won the Academy Award: *An American in Paris* (1951), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954) and *West Side Story* (1961). He did the vocal arrangements for Al Jolson in *The Jolson Story* (1946), Judy Garland in *Summer Stock* (1950) - including her famous rendition of "Get Happy" - and Crosby and Sinatra in *High Society* (1956). His own compositions include the standards "Until the Real Thing Comes Along", "Please Be Kind" and the song which first brought fame to the Andrews Sisters, "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön".

Born Saul Kaplan in Brooklyn, New York in 1912, he was educated at the NYU School of Commerce, but after graduation became pianist with a Dixieland dance band, the Pals of Harmony. In the mid-Thirties he co-led a band with Sammy Cahn, and in 1935 the pair collaborated on their first song hit, "Rhythm is Our Business", written as a theme song for the Jimmy Lunceford band. The pair were in demand as special



Chaplin (left), Adolph Green (centre) and Gene Kelly on the set of *An American in Paris*, 1951

Photograph: Kobal

material writers for vaudeville and night-club acts and had further hit parade songs with "Shoe Shine Boy" (introduced by Louis Armstrong in the Cotton Club Revue) and "Until the Real Thing Comes Along" (both 1936). "Bei Mir Bist Du Schön" (1937), its melody based on a Yiddish popular song by Sholom Secunda) and "Please Be Kind" (1938, written for a Vitaphone short and banned by NBC ra-

dio because of the line, "This is my first affair...").

In 1939, encouraged to move to Hollywood, the team wrote both the script and songs for a Republic "B" movie, *Rookies on Parade*, then were signed as song-writers by Columbia, contributing to such low-budget fare as *Two Ladies from Manhattan*, *Two Blondes and a Redhead* and *The Redhead from Manhattan*. Two years later they split up, Cahn forming a song-

writing partnership with Jule Styne and Chaplin becoming a composer-arranger at Columbia Studios, working on several of their perky "B" musicals starring Ann Miller.

Chaplin maintained fond memories of those days. "For heaven's sake, don't leave out Ann Miller," he told the historian Max Wilk. "That's my real distinction - I have done more films with Ann Miller than anyone alive. My life from 1940

to 1959 was Ann Miller, because when she moved to MGM, I did too!" Chaplin's Miller musicals at Columbia included *Time Out for Rhythm* (1941), *What's Buzzin' Cousin* (1943), *Carolina Blues* (1944) and *Eadie Was a Lady* (1945) and, though minor, they were distinguished by Miller's dazzling tap dancing and the skilful orchestrations, such as the sensually pulsating "Take a Chance" in *Hey, Rookie* (1944).

Cover Girl (1944), starring Rita Hayworth and Gene Kelly (who was to become a lifelong friend) was Chaplin's first major musical, and his work included the arrangement of the celebrated "Alter Ego" dance. For the enormously successful *The Jolson Story*, Chaplin not only provided vocal arrangements but had a surprise song hit.

The producer felt that Larry Parks, as Jolie, needed something to sing at his parents' anniversary party. Jolie said he knew a tune that would fit - an old semi-classical Russian waltz written by I. Ivanovici. He hummed it and it sounded great, so I knocked out some lyrics in about 45 minutes. As "The Anniversary Song", it was supposed to be a little throwaway thing, but it sold over a million records and has become a standard.

In 1949, when MGM were in need of a vocal arranger for *On The Town*, Gene Kelly suggested Chaplin, who was signed to a contract and stayed at the studio for nine years. Most of Leonard Bernstein's music for the stage version of *On The Town* was jettisoned for the film and Bernstein, worried about how the remaining music would be used, sent a wire to MGM, part of which read, "Only Saul Chaplin is authorised to adapt the music I wrote for the stage version of *On The Town*".

In October, 1949, Chaplin was divorced from his first wife, Ethel Schwartz (their daughter Judy is the wife of Broadway producer Harold Prince), and in 1968 he married Betty Levin.

that was doing very well. That settled it. As long as they could do it, we certainly could do it, only do it better.

George Gershwin's brother Ira considered Chaplin's adaptation of Gershwin's suite "overblown", but even he admitted the sequence was "beautiful and fascinating".

When a duet was needed for Debbie Reynolds and Carleton Carpenter to perform in *Two Weeks With Love* (1950), Chaplin remembered a vaudeville number from his youth and made an arrangement for them of "Aba Daba Honeymoon" that became the hit of the film. For *Summer Stock* (1950), he composed the ballad "You Wonderful You", and when a number was needed for six dancers in *Kiss Me Kate* (1953, with Ann Miller), he suggested a song that had been cut from another Cole Porter musical, "From This Moment On". *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* brought Chaplin his second Oscar. For *High Society*, "I unearthed one of Cole Porter's old songs, 'Well, Did You Evah?', and Cole wrote a new set of lyrics for Crosby and Sinatra, though I'm proud to say I had a word or two in there, with his approval".

He was promoted to Associate Producer on *Les Girls* (1957), on which he helped the ailing Cole Porter put together a coherent score, followed by *Merry Andrew* (1958) and *Can-Can* (1960). I first met Chaplin in 1963 when he was in England to work with Judy Garland on *I Could Go On Singing*, and found a genial and generous gentleman whose personality belied the toughness he must have had to deal with studio temperaments. I mentioned to him how much I admired his

arrangements for the 1951 remake of *Roberta*, titled *Lovely To Look At*, in particular his ballet arrangement of Jerome Kern's "Yesterdays". A few weeks later I received acetate copies of the studio pre-recordings from Chaplin's own collection.

I met him again four years later on the set on his production *Star!*, where we watched in admiration as Julie Andrews executed in one take a formidably complicated routine to "Burlington Bertie". "Julie Andrews and Judy Garland are the most totally professional stars I have ever worked with," Saul said. "They both pick up a melody or routine immediately with a facility that amazes."

After his departure from MGM, Chaplin had two of his greatest successes with *West Side Story* (1961), and *The Sound of Music* (1965). He spent two years on the production of *Thou's Entertainment Part 2* (1976), a sequel to the successful compilation of musical extracts, this one featuring Kelly and Astaire dancing together in new linking sequences. Afterwards Saul Chaplin said the most frequent question asked in letters was, "Why don't they make pictures like that anymore?", to which he would answer, "Cost". He ended his autobiography, *The Golden Age of Movie Musicals and Me* (1994), on a hopeful note:

I hope that the next phase in the development of movie musicals will combine what was outstanding about the earlier films with the best features of today's, including the startling new audio and visual technologies that are constantly being developed. Musicals will then regain their rightful glory. In the meantime, there is an enormous audience out there waiting.

- Tom Vulliamy

Camilla Cederna

Camilla Cederna, journalist: born Milan 21 January 1911; died Milan 9 November 1997.

The journalist Camilla Cederna was a high-society rebel. Born into a well-heeled Milanese family in 1911, she made her name writing a barbed gossip column in a weekly news magazine. It was only gradually that indulgent irony gave way to well-informed indignation. She is best remembered for her 1978 book *Giovanni Leone* - an exposé of the Christian Democrat president's alleged in-

volvement in the Lockheed scandal, which forced his resignation in June 1978. Imagine Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein writing for *Tatler*, and you come close to her inimitable approach.

The daughter of a textile baron, she grew up coddled by the securities of Milan's *alta borghesia*: first nights at La Scala, tea and panettone at Cova in Via Montenapoleone, summers in a family house in the Valtellina (in her autobiography of 1980, *Il mondo di Camilla* she recalls "the sound of the rain on a huge beech tree outside the

window"). Her undergraduate thesis was symptomatic of a study of "Female luxury from the minor Greek philosophers to the early Church Fathers". In 1943, when Italy was on the brink of civil war, she wrote one of her first articles - a tongue-in-cheek piece on "Fascist Fashion" - which earned her a brief spell in prison for having "poked fun at the mothers of martyrs".

After the war, she joined the newly founded news weekly *L'Europeo*. In 1956 she moved over to *Eugenio Scalfari's* more politically committed *L'Espresso*, where she was to stay for 25

years. Here she wrote a weekly column, "Il lato debole" ("The Weak Side"), in which she registered the tics and frivolities of her fellow Milanese *borghesi*.

In the late Sixties, as Italy's gilded youth was discovering the joys of student rebellion, Cederna - by now almost 60 herself - discovered a latent vocation for investigative journalism. Indeed, many would say that she single-handedly dragged the investigative genre into the play-safe world of Italian journalism. Her first campaign - which in 1971 became a book - aimed to shed light on

the death of the Milanese anarchist Giuseppe Pinelli, who "fell from a window" of the city's police HQ while being questioned about the Piazza Fontana bombing. (The Nobel laureate Dario Fo would later draw on the "accident" and the subsequent cover-up in his play *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*). When the Milanese police chief Luigi Calabresi was later shot by left-wing terrorists, Cederna was given a police escort for several months.

Later exposés pointed the finger at the way Italy's security forces were using the threat

of terrorism to infringe civil liberties; but most explosive of all was her 1978 denunciation of the rise to power and financial speculations of the country's then president, Giovanni Leone, in a book which sold 800,000 copies - a record for a political title. Leone was forced to resign, but he later sued Cederna and her publisher, Inge Feltrinelli, and won huge damages. In order to pay, she had to sell the family jewels.

During the hearings, the prosecution lawyer marvelled that "she still dares to wear jeans at her age". By this time,

Cederna was *persona non grata* at many Milanese dinner parties - but Federico Fellini and other close friends stood by her.

Camilla Cederna was amply vindicated when the Tangentopoli bribery scandal broke in 1992, revealing the corruption that lay just beneath the fur-coated façade of her beloved, berated native city. Never one to turn the other cheek, she said in a recent interview: "You can't imagine how smug I've been feeling recently, as I watch the downfall of people I've been alone in denouncing for years".

- Lee Marshall



Cederna: vindicated

Eddie Arcaro

George Edward Arcaro, jockey: born Cincinnati, Ohio 19 February 1916; twice married (one son, one daughter); died Miami, Florida 14 November 1997.

Riding for 31 seasons (1931-61), when horse-racing in America was at the height of its popularity, the jockey Eddie Arcaro stood out as the sport's most famous and popular participant.

Known as "The Master" for his riding ability, Arcaro was as tough as they come in a day when the sport, void of today's technological advances, was most unforgiving. At the time of his death, he still held the record for career earnings (of \$30m) and was second only to Johnny Longden in the number of his victories.

Arcaro was a record-setter. He is the only American rider to have ridden two winners of the

Triple Crown - the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes - Whirlaway (1941) and Citation (1948). His five Kentucky Derby victories have been matched only by Bill Hartack. He also rode a record six Preakness winners and a co-record five runnings of the Belmont Stakes.

A powerful rider, he was fearless as well and would not hesitate to put his rivals in a tight spot. He was ruled off the

racecourse for a year for nearly putting another rider, Vincent Nodare, over the rail, in a race in New York in 1942. Asked by the stewards about the incident, Arcaro replied: "Are you blind? I was trying to kill the Cuban son of a bitch."

Only at the request of the powerful owner of Greentree Stables, Mrs Harry Payne Whitney, was he allowed to ride again. Mrs Whitney, very ill at the time, wrote to the US Jockey Club chairman William

Woodward and told him she wanted to see Arcaro ride again in her colours before her death. It was a request that Woodward, a member of America's social elite along with Mrs Whitney, could not deny.

Arcaro was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1916, the son of an Italian immigrant cab driver. His father eventually became a bookmaker, which gave Arcaro his first introduction to horse-

racing. The family moved when he was 11 to northern Kentucky, near the old Latonia race-track, and soon young Eddie was knocking on racing's door.

He was a stablehand before being hired as an apprentice rider by the trainer Odie Clelland, developer of many successful jockeys. He then joined the trainer Alvin Booker's stable and went to Ohio where he began his riding career in 1931. His first victory was recorded

at Agua Caliente race-track in Mexico on 14 January 1932. His victory total would eventually reach 4,779.

These were the days when trainers virtually owned riders, and while Arcaro's contract remained with Booker, his career was going nowhere. But another trainer, Clarence Davidson, saw great potential in him and after buying his contract, took him to Chicago, where he immediately doubled his win to-

tal the following season, in 1933. The Calumet Farm stable bought Arcaro's contract a year later for \$6,000 and his future was assured.

When he retired, Eddie Arcaro spent most of his time playing golf, perhaps his greatest love. He also worked for a time as part of a presenting crew for ABC television, and was always a great representative to the general public for the sport.

- Don Farley

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

BIRDY Wilfred John, passed away, 16 November 1997, after a major operation, aged 72 years. Loving husband of Silvey, beloved father of Peter, father-in-law of Charlotte, grandfather of Philip and Henry, and brother of Dorcas. Funeral service, Wednesday 26 November 1997, 11am, at St Chad's Church, Rubery, followed by cremation at Redditch Crematorium, 12 noon. Family flowers only, please. Donations if desired for the British Heart Foundation, through the family. Silvey and family would also like to thank staff at Selby Oak Hospital, LTL, and the Q.E. Hospital, Hemel Unit.

TOUGHRID David Megumi, London-based choreographer, died peacefully at his Toronto home, Saturday 15 November 1997, after a courageous battle with cancer. Beloved brother to Samuel, Essack, Makiko and husband Roy. James and wife Elaine. Grace and husband Edward, Allan and wife Emilie, and Miki. David was much loved by his 16 nephews and nieces. Many thanks to his friends and colleagues for their love and support. If desired, a memorial donation can be sent to the National Youth Theatre, 443-445 Holloway Road, London N7 6LW, to create a choreography bursary in David's name.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh, to mark the Golden Wedding Anniversary of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, attended a Thanksgiving Service at Westminster Abbey, London SW1, attended a lunch hosted by the Government at Banqueting House, London SW1, and host a private dance at Windsor Castle. The Prince of Wales hosts a lunch at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, for members of royal families and guests attending the Golden Wedding Celebrations

band Roy, James and wife Elaine. Grace and husband Edward, Allan and wife Emilie, and Miki. David was much loved by his 16 nephews and nieces. Many thanks to his friends and colleagues for their love and support. If desired, a memorial donation can be sent to the National Youth Theatre, 443-445 Holloway Road, London N7 6LW, to create a choreography bursary in David's name.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 071-293 2942 or faxed to 071-293 2910, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line. VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward, to mark the Golden Wedding Anniversary of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, attended a Thanksgiving Service at Westminster Abbey, London SW1, and attends the private dance at Windsor Castle.

Changing of the Guard The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

Mr Michael Alexander, explorer and writer, 77; Lord Archer of Sandwell QC, former MP 71; The Hon Hugh Astor, former deputy chairman of the Times, 77; Mr Peter Badger, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, 66; Mr Alistair Cooke, journalist and broadcaster, 89; Sir Alan Goodison, former diplomat, 71; Miss Nadine Gordimer, novelist and Nobel prize-winner, 74; Miss Dulcie Gray, actress and writer, 77; Mr Aubrey Jones, former government minister, 86; Mr Para Khaira MP, 73; Mr Johnny Leach, former table tennis champion, 75; Mr James McPherson, solicitor, and Lord-Lieutenant of the Grampian Region, 70; Sir David Price, former MP 73; Mr Arthur Rees, former chief constable for Denbighshire and Staffordshire, rugby player, and chairman, St John's Staffordshire, 85.

Anniversaries

Births: Thomas Chatterton, poet, 1752; Sir Samuel Cunard, shipowner, 1787; Gene Tierney, actress, 1920. Deaths: Anton Grigoryevich Rubinstein, pianist and composer, 1894; Lev Nikolayevich, Count Tolstoy, novelist, 1910. On this day: Charles Stewart Rolls and Frederick Henry Royce combined to form the firm of Rolls Royce, 1906; Princess Elizabeth married the Duke of Edinburgh, 1947. Today is the Feast Day of St Bernard, St Denis, St Edmund the Martyr, St Felix of Valois, St Marcellina of Beauvais and St Nereus of Suberga.

LAW REPORT: 20 NOVEMBER 1997

Estate agent was not entitled to commission on sale

An estate agent who was engaged by a client to act with "sole selling rights", as defined in the Estate Agents (Provision of Information) Regulations 1991 made under s 18 of the Estate Agents Act 1979, was not entitled to commission on a sale made after the expiry of the agreement to a purchaser who had been introduced to the client during the period of the agreement, if he had neither effected the introduction nor negotiated with the buyer.

Michael Harwood v/a RBS Group v Smith & ors Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Hobhouse, Lord Justice Pill and Lord Justice Mummery) 14 November 1997

The Court of Appeal dismissed the plaintiff's appeal against a finding under Order 14A of the Rules of the Supreme Court

that he was not entitled to a commission payment from the defendants.

The plaintiff, an estate agent, had been engaged by the defendants to act as their agent with sole selling rights for a minimum of six months in connection with the sale of a residential nursing home, at a fee of three and a half per cent of the agreed selling price of the property. During that time the defendants became dissatisfied with the plaintiff's services, and gave him written notice to terminate his agency at the end of the six-month period.

Before giving notice to the plaintiff, the defendants had seen a newspaper advertisement saying that a residential nursing home was wanted. They had responded to the advertisement, and negotiations had ensued between them and the advertisers. The plaintiff

had at no stage been involved in those negotiations. Two days after the termination of the plaintiff's agency, the defendants sold the property to the buyers they had found.

The plaintiff commenced proceedings claiming from the defendants either a commission of three and a half per cent on the selling price of the property, or alternatively liquidated or other damages for alleged breach of contract. He applied for summary judgment under RSC Order 14, and appealed to the county court against the refusal of that application. It was agreed that the claim for commission depended upon a point of law which should be decided under Order 14A, and the alternative claim for breach of contract was stood over. The judge decided the Order 14A question against the plaintiff. Brian Riley (Howe Roche & Wallis,

Stenage) for the plaintiff, Antonia Morris (Chivers Walsh Smith, Bradford) for the defendants.

Lord Justice Hobhouse said that the point at issue was the construction of the contract between the plaintiff and the defendants. The definition of "sole selling rights" in the contract was taken from the Estate Agents (Provision of Information) Regulations 1991 made under section 18 of the Estate Agents Act 1979, and was in the following terms:

You will be liable to pay remuneration to us, in addition to any other costs or charges agreed, in each of the following circumstances: (a) if unconditional contracts for the sale of the property are exchanged in the period during which we have sole selling rights, even if the purchaser was not found by us but by another agent or by any other person including yourself; (b) if unconditional contracts for the sale of the property are exchanged after the expiry

of the period during which we have sole selling rights but to a purchaser who was introduced to you during that period or with whom we had negotiations about the property during that period.

Paragraph (b) appeared to cover two alternatives: either the individual had been introduced to the client by the agent, or the individual had been introduced to the client by somebody else, but the agent had negotiated with him on behalf of the client. That was the meaning of the paragraph which was arrived at on a consideration of how a client would reasonably understand the language used, which was the critical consideration.

The plaintiff's argument that the relevant words in paragraph (b) meant "introduced by anyone" could not, accordingly be accepted, and the appeal would be dismissed. - Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR



Sealing the deal (from left) Herb Allison, president of Merrill Lynch, Hugh Stevenson, chairman of Mercury Asset Management, Michael Marks and David Causser

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Merrill snaps up MAM in unexpected £3.1bn deal

The revolution in global financial markets took an unexpected step yesterday as Merrill Lynch agreed a £3.1bn takeover of Britain's biggest fund manager, Mercury Asset Management.

Tom Stevenson, financial editor, watched another British institution fall into foreign ownership.

Merrill Lynch snapped up Mercury Asset Management yesterday with a £17 a share recommended offer. The surprise deal will create the world's third largest fund manager, catapulting MAM's senior fund managers, Carol Galley and Stephen Zimmerman, to the head of a global investment powerhouse.

MAM, which saw its funds under management recently pass the £100bn mark for the first time, will continue trading under its current name in the UK. Worldwide, Merrill Lynch Mercury will control \$450bn (£266bn) of funds, putting it behind only Fidelity and Axa.

The deal is a further blow to British ownership of the world's leading financial organisations. The takeover follows the acquisition by foreign buyers of Morgan Grenfell, SG Warburg, Kleinwort Benson and Barings. Barclays has just agreed to sell its investment banking arm, BZW, to Credit Suisse First Boston and NatWest is rumoured to be considering a sale of its Markets arm to an overseas bank.

The terms of the deal, which valued MAM at 3 per cent of its funds under management, took the City by surprise and sent shares in other fund managers soaring yesterday. When NatWest bought Gartmore

recently it paid under 2 per cent of assets under management and yesterday analysts were reassessing the possible value of similar businesses.

M&G, a fund manager with a big retail franchise, saw its shares rise 160p to 1335p. Perpetual jumped 240p to 2475p and Schroders, an investment bank with a big fund management operation, rose 140p to 1815p. MAM's shares closed 380p higher at 1675p.

The £17 a share being paid by Merrill Lynch in cash represents a 31 per cent premium to MAM's share price before the deal was announced. Reflecting an uncharacteristically poor investment performance recently, MAM's shares have underperformed the market this year after outperforming strongly in the 10 years since it was floated off from its parent SG Warburg in 1987.

David Komansky, chairman and chief executive of Merrill Lynch, denied yes-

terday that the takeover, worth 25 times MAM's earnings last year, represented a classic top-of-bull-market deal. He said MAM was an ideal strategic fit for Merrill, adding that the price reflected the great potential of the combined group.

Fund management is being seen as one of the greatest areas of growth in the financial services. Around the world, deregulation, demographic trends and the withdrawal of governments from welfare provision are creating opportunities that only large fund managers will be able to fully exploit.

The deal will give Merrill a leading position in UK fund management and access to European and Asian markets. For Mercury, the takeover opens up the vast US market where it has so far had almost no presence.

Hugh Stevenson, chairman of MAM, will remain with Merrill Lynch for a year

to oversee the integration and is then expected to bow out. His deputy chairman, Mr Zimmerman, and vice chair Ms Galley become joint heads of the combined operation, which will be based in London.

The operations of Merrill and MAM are almost completely complementary and Mr Stevenson promised there would be no redundancies as a result of the takeover. MAM employs 1,300 staff in 19 countries, almost insignificant compared to Merrill's 54,200 employees in 45 countries.

The only question mark over the deal was the likely reaction of MAM's institutional clients to its change of ownership. Nigel Tylor, a pensions consultant, who advises several Mercury clients, said: "MAM has been going through a difficult period, performance-wise on their pension fund assets. This on top is going to unnerve people."

Outlook, page 25

Four leave after UBS suffers big trading loss

The giant Union Bank of Switzerland yesterday disclosed that it had been rocked by huge trading losses, possibly running into hundreds of millions of pounds, incurred by three derivatives traders in New York. The traders have left the bank and the affair has also claimed the scalp of their boss, Rami Goldstein, who worked at the UBS London office.

UBS refused to quantify the size of the loss, declined to make any comment on whether the losses resulted from fraudulent trading and would not discuss the circumstances surrounding the departure of the four employees. Traders at other City houses reckoned the losses suffered by UBS could top £220m.

The New York-based traders were Ronny Apfel, Neall Thalmeier and Allen Burstein. Mr Goldstein was described by one trader last night as "an extremely sharp guy", and was generally considered to be one of the most talented dealers in the City. All four worked for UBS's equity derivatives department.

One trader said: "The view here is that they [the four traders] were sacked because they lost money, not because anything underhand, such as mispricing, was going on." But another said he was "very surprised" at Mr Goldstein's departure and the manner of the departure suggested "something big" had gone on.

In August, UBS said its first-half figures for its equity derivatives department were "unsatisfactory". The bank did not detail results for its equity derivatives division, but total trading income rose by just 1 per cent. One banking observer said last night: "The first-half results, though disappointing, do not seem sufficient to warrant Mr Goldstein's departure."

Mr Goldstein's responsibilities will transfer to Hans Peter Bauer, global head of fixed income, currencies and derivatives. The departure of the derivative traders is thought by some dealers in the City to be part of a big reshuffle. UBS is likely to announce details of a wide-ranging shake-up of management tomorrow.

— Leo Paterson

PIA set to fine firm of financial advisers £600,000

The Personal Investment Authority, the financial regulator, is set to underline its determination to resolve the pensions mis-selling review by levying a record fine of around £600,000 against a firm of financial advisers. But as Nic Catti, Personal Finance Editor, reports, the PIA's stance is under attack amid claims that the watchdog has ducked from taking on the big offenders.

The PIA's disciplinary committee is understood to be in the final stages of agreeing the details of a £600,000 fine against Financial Options, a network of independent financial advisers. An announcement is expected in the next few weeks. It is believed £400,000 of that fine will relate to failures on the part of the network to meet deadlines set in connection with the pension mis-selling review. The remaining £200,000 is thought to be in connection with other compliance failures, identified in a visit by PIA inspectors to the company's Manchester headquarters more than a year ago. These were judged not to have been rectified in an inspection earlier this year.

A spokeswoman for the regulator yesterday refused to comment on the looming fine. Financial Options said it did not wish to "give credence to rumours". But Garry Heath, chief executive of the IFA Association, the advisers' trade body, said: "There is inequity in the way this question is being dealt with. Big companies are only being named and shamed, giving the impression that it is only the smaller players who are the worst offenders."

Financial Options, founded in 1990 by two advisers, Brian Blake and Ron Leith, is the

UK's third-largest IFA network, with more than 600 financial advisers.

The company offers to sort out compliance problems for its members in return for a slice of their commission income, which reached about £15m last year. The privately owned company's turnover in the first half of this year, including other business ventures, was £12.2m.

The PIA fine will be the fifth large penalty arising from the pensions review since the summer. It follows a £50,000 levy on Berkeley, a Coventry-based firm of IFAs; £425,000 against DBS Financial Management, a stock market-quoted network of advisers; and £140,000 against M&E, another IFA network. To date, the only fine against an insurer is £450,000 against Friends Provident last month.

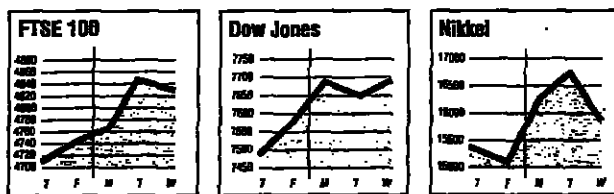
Action by the regulator against those judged to be failing in the speed with which the pensions review is being carried out comes amid mounting criticism by Helen Liddell, the Treasury Minister, of many of the bigger insurers' delays in compensating victims of the pension transfer scandal.

More than 600,000 policies switched from occupational schemes to private pensions between the late 1980s and early 1990s have been identified by companies as being in need of urgent review. It is believed that at least half will require compensation because the advice to opt out of company schemes was wrong. Up to 400,000 people are waiting for compensation more than four years after the problem was identified.

Mrs Liddell threatened on Tuesday to prevent the worst-offending pension providers from offering stakeholder pensions and individual savings accounts and to bar individual company directors from working within the industry.

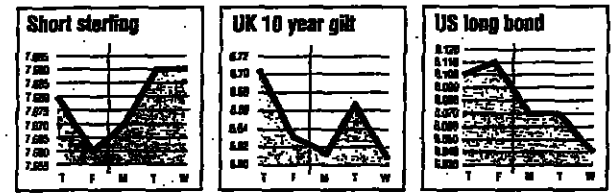
The minister hopes to use new provisions, set to come in force next year, whereby the PIA will use newly launched individual registration procedures to weed out errant directors.

STOCK MARKETS



Indices	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	4830.10	-15.30	-0.32	5367.30	3882.70	3.61
FTSE 250	4520.30	6.80	0.15	4983.80	4221.80	3.48
FTSE 350	2328.20	5.20	0.22	2570.50	1933.70	3.38
FTSE All Share	2285.51	-5.08	-0.22	2507.88	1942.22	3.36
FTSE SmallCap	2275.6	-4.40	-0.19	2407.40	2127.50	3.25
FTSE Retailing	1249.1	-2.00	-0.16	1346.50	1196.70	3.41
FTSE AIM	383.8	0.80	0.08	1138.00	365.50	1.05
Dow Jones	7822.32	40.27	0.53	8298.03	6236.05	1.76
Nikkei	18442.46	-864.11	-4.52	21480.57	14868.13	0.67
Hang Seng	10154.35	-240.82	-2.37	16820.31	8775.88	3.82
Hsi	3834.82	1.35	0.04	4458.89	2756.11	2.08

INTEREST RATES

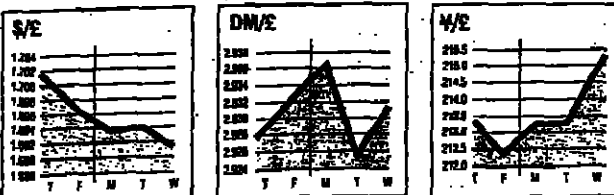


Index	3 months	1 year	10 year	10 year	10 year	10 year
UK	7.68	1.27	7.54	0.93	6.61	6.53
US	5.88	0.58	6.00	0.53	5.82	5.84
Japan	0.44	-0.05	0.53	-0.11	1.94	0.78
Germany	3.75	0.57	4.11	0.81	5.52	6.15

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Falls
Mercury Asset 1675.00 380.00 29.34	Ionica Grp 156.50-101.00 -39.22
M&G Grp 1335.00 160.00 13.82	D-Mark 330.00 -84.00 -16.24
Perpetual 2475.00 240.00 10.74	Williams 350.0 -39.0 -10.13
Allied Colloids 125.00 10.50 8.17	TI Group 470 -30 -6.35

CURRENCIES



Pound	Dollar	Yen
Dollar 1.6915 -0.45c 1.6776	Sterling 0.6912 +0.15p 0.5981	
D-Mark 2.9317 +0.53pf 2.5144	D-Mark 1.7326 +0.79pf 1.5058	
Yen 215.33 +¥1.84 187.08	Yen 127.17 +¥1.30 111.81	
£ index 104.00 +0.20 92.10	£ index 106.30 +¥1.80 96.10	

OTHER INDICATORS

Commodity	Price	Change	Yr Ago	Index	Price	Change	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	19.26	0.16	22.72	GBP	114.00	3.90	109.7
Gold (\$)	384.96	-1.00	378.45	RPI	158.50	3.7	153.81
Silver (\$)	6.12	0.01	4.87	Base Rates	7.25	6.00	

www.bloomberg.com source: Bloomberg

P&O-Stena merger gets green light

An Anglo-Scandinavian ferry giant emerged yesterday as Britain's P&O and Sweden's Stena Line were given a conditional go-ahead for their merger by competition authorities in Westminster and Brussels.

Both the UK Government and the European Commission gave the merger the green light provided the two companies agreed to price capping on short Channel routes once duty-free sales were abolished in mid-

1999. The new company, P&O Stena Line, will start operations early in 1998. Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, said the price cap was necessary because the abolition of duty-free retailing might have led to a "fall-out" among ferry operators.

Despite the seemingly onerous condition, both companies expressed delight with the deal. They have been waiting to combine since October 1996 when

both claimed they needed to cut capacity and end the fierce fare wars between ferry operators.

"We will start implementing the plan within hours. It's been a long time waiting for it but at least it has been worth waiting for," said Lord Sterling, chairman of P&O.

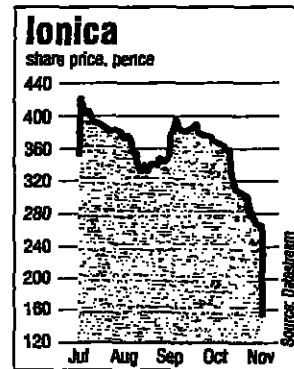
Stena will take a 40 per cent stake in the venture while P&O will get the remaining 60 per cent. Both will have equal voting rights.

Some 1,000 jobs in the total workforce of 5,000 are likely to be axed through voluntary redundancy. The Rail, Maritime and Transport workers union, which represents most staff, gave a cautious welcome to the merger. The two companies will combine operations across the Channel, especially on the lucrative Dover-Calais route, competing mainly with Euro-tunnel.

— Randeep Ramesh

Shares in Ionica crash 40 per cent

Ionica, the fledgling telecoms operator which entered the market in competition with British Telecom 18 months ago, was facing its first crisis last night after its shares crashed 40 per cent in a day. Michael Harrison examines where the strategy has gone wrong and whether the business can get back on track.



Shares in Ionica, which was floated on the stock market in July at 390p, collapsed by more than £1 yesterday to close at 156.5p, wiping £170m from its market value.

The plunge followed a warning from the company that subscriber growth had come to a halt because of computer software problems in its "wireless" telephone network.

Since Ionica's £640m flotation four months ago, the value of the business has shrunk by 60 per cent and the shares are now barely trading above what analysts estimate to be its net asset value.

The cause of yesterday's dramatic decline was a warning from the company that delays in the installation of computer software into its network of base stations meant that its ability to sign up new customers would be severely constrained until next May. But analysts were even

more unnerved by the high churn rate of customers quitting the network, which operates by using fixed radio technology rather than underground cables and overhead wires.

The City also took fright at the slowness with which Ionica is managing to install its nationwide network of 3,500 base stations that will eventually cover 18 million homes.

In the past three months customer numbers have grown by only 7,000 to just over 31,000 while coverage has increased to 1.65 million homes. Operating losses rose to £34m.

Ionica yesterday appointed a new chief operating officer, Mike Biden, and two other senior executives. Mr Biden was formerly in charge of sales and marketing for BT's residential telephone business. But the City remained unimpressed. "This is a woeful tale of management inadequacy and incompetence," one analyst said.

Outlook, page 25

NOTICE TO NEW LOOK CARDHOLDERS

THE MONTHLY RATES OF INTEREST APPLICABLE TO NEW LOOK CARD ACCOUNTS OPERATED BY GE CAPITAL BANK LIMITED ARE TO BE INCREASED AS FOLLOWS:-

FOR CARDHOLDERS PAYING BY DIRECT DEBIT THE MONTHLY RATE WILL BE 2.15% (EQUIVALENT TO AN APR OF 29.0 [VARIABLE]). FOR CARDHOLDERS PAYING BY ANY OTHER MEANS THE MONTHLY RATE WILL BE 2.28% (EQUIVALENT TO AN APR OF 31.0 [VARIABLE]).

THE NEW RATES WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE ON 1 DECEMBER 1997 AND WILL APPLY TO ALL INTEREST BEARING BALANCES OUTSTANDING ON AND TO ALL TRANSACTIONS DEBITED FROM THAT DATE.

THE FINANCIAL DETAILS IN CARDHOLDERS' CREDIT AGREEMENTS ARE VARIED TO REFLECT THESE CHANGES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THOSE AGREEMENTS.

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GE CAPITAL BANK LIMITED IS AFFILIATED WITH GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY (USA) AND NOT CONNECTED WITH THE ENGLISH COMPANY OF A SIMILAR NAME.

GBM303 11/97

South Korean minister quits as financial crisis explodes

Political heads rolled and a battery of measures were announced yesterday to try and stem the financial crisis in South Korea which is so big that it threatens to make the economic woes of other Asian nations look like little more than a sideshow. Stephen Vines reports from Hong Kong.

The situation in South Korea is now so serious that the government has abandoned all pretence that little bits of tinkering are sufficient to stop the free-fall of the local currency, the massive drop in share prices and a general attack of jitters about the stability of the nation's financial institutions.

Yesterday, a day after the National Assembly showed itself incapable of passing urgently required finance reform bills, the Finance Minister Kang Kyong-shik stepped down to take blame for the crisis and was replaced by Lim Chang-yul, 53, a former International Monetary Fund (IMF) executive director.

His hand has been strengthened by his additional appoint-

ment as deputy premier. The appointment sent a small breeze of optimism through the stock market where the blue chip index, which has been in free-fall in recent weeks, managed a modest 1.6 per cent rally.

Mr Lim has wasted no time in announcing measures which start to address the problems of Korea's chaotic, corrupt and clearly floundering financial system which is attached to one of the world's biggest industrial powerhouses but is light years behind the industrial sector in its development.

According to Mr Lim the nation's banks are saddled with non-performing loans totalling \$28.5bn (£17bn). The outlook for recovery is not good unless there is wholesale restructuring of the financial sector and a large measure of government assistance. For a start Mr Lim announced a tripling of the size of the government's bail out fund for financial institutions to \$10bn.

Meanwhile, there is relentless pressure on the Korean won, which has devalued by more than 20 per cent in the past year. Yesterday it hit a new low of 1,035 against the US dollar. Mr Lim declared that the government would now allow fluctuations of up to 10 per cent, instead of 2.25 per cent, in ef-

fect sending the won into free float.

This measure will contribute to the greater convertibility of the won, which, in the short term, is likely to be something of a liability but in the longer term will contribute to greater internationalisation of the financial sector.

Mr Lim pushed this process along yesterday by announcing a series of reforms that were previously strongly resisted by conservative figures. Among the more important measures are: the opening of the corporate medium and long term bond market to foreign investors and the stepping up of sovereign loan raising overseas.

A move to give greater access to foreigners in the equity markets was also recently introduced but got rather lost in the scramble for the exit by overseas institutions who had been brave enough to deal in South Korean shares.

The South Korean market had been awash with rumours that Seoul would follow the example of the Thai, Philippine and Indonesian governments in seeking IMF assistance to alleviate the financial crisis. However, fiercely nationalistic and independent Korea is loath to follow suite.

Mr Lim said yesterday that instead of going to the IMF he was looking for "strong" co-operation particularly from the US and Japan, which have extensive ties to Korea. He said that loans from American and Japanese banks would help their economies because of the strength of these ties.

Meanwhile, an emergency eleven-person committee is being established to urgently consider measures to tackle the crisis. Three of the committee's members will be journalists, providing yet another demonstration that Korea tends to do things differently from other countries.

The Korean economy is far bigger than that of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand combined. These countries have so far driven the Asian financial crisis. It is daunting to contemplate what may happen if the situation in Korea really gets out of hand.

Despite worries about this in Japan, domestic concerns yesterday were the main reason for the stock market falling over 5 per cent, its biggest single day percentage point decline in almost two years.

The sharp fall followed a two day rally which pushed the market up by 11 per cent as investors

looked forward to government intervention to bail out ailing financial institutions. When it was made clear that this was not in the government's mind, sentiment rapidly swung negative.

Elsewhere in Asia markets were dominated by low volumes business as investors shied away from taking positions. The Malaysian stock market, which was badly shaken on Tuesday by what looked like a political motivated bailout of a company controlled by the ruling party, remained shaky with shares falling some 3 per cent in value.

Meanwhile, a fresh plunge in Japan's stock market boosted the dollar and US Treasury bonds. The Nikkei index fell more than 5 per cent to 15,842.46, its biggest drop since the January 1995 Kobe earthquake, after Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Prime Minister, denied that public funds would be used to rescue the ailing banking system.

In New York trading, the dollar surged to six month high of Yen127.34 against the Japanese currency.

The rise in the benchmark 30-year Treasury bond took its yield to the lowest for nearly two years in a pronounced "safe-haven" effect.



Kang Kyong-shik stepped down to take blame for the crisis and was replaced by Lim Chang-yul, 53 (above), a former International Monetary Fund executive director

Safeway slumps on profits warning

Safeway, the supermarket group which abandoned a £9bn merger with Asda in September, suffered a setback yesterday with a shock profits warning caused by poor sales growth and low product availability. Nigel Cope, City Correspondent, reports on a new victim in the supermarket battle.

did not intend to restart talks because the regulatory hurdles were likely to prove insurmountable. "I don't see any circumstances under which discussions could be reopened," said Safeway's chief executive, Colin Smith.

As the shares crashed 64p to 330p, analysts said Safeway faced a long haul to improve its performance. "Safeway has been exposed for what it is - Britain's fourth-best supermarket operator," said Andrew Fowler of UBS. Frank Davidson, of HSBC James Capel, said Safeway would find it hard to stimulate its sales because of its weaker brand and a more compromised store portfolio which featured too few large, out-of-town stores.

Another analyst said Safeway would find it much harder than Sainsbury's to engineer a revival: "The difference is that Sainsbury's was a historically very good business that just had a couple of bad years."

Mr Smith admitted the company might have taken its eye of the basics of retailing.

The profits warning came as Safeway announced flat first-half profits of £228m. Like-for-like sales increased by just 2.8 per cent on last year.

Investment column, page 27

National Power to spend £1bn abroad

National Power yesterday unveiled plans to invest a further £1bn on overseas expansion and cast doubts on the prospects of clean coal technology coming to the rescue of Britain's mining industry. Michael Harrison reports.

Keith Henry, National Power's chief executive, said its equity investments in overseas gen-

erating capacity were likely to double in the next two to three years. Since privatisation in 1991, it has spent £1bn taking interests in 8,500 megawatts of plant. But Mr Henry said this figure could rise to 11,000 to 12,000 megawatts by 2000 and result in a further equity investment of £1bn.

National Power has identified seven projects it is hopeful of proceeding with including a \$1.5bn (£890m) coal-fired station in Indonesia and two big gas and coal-fired stations in China.

News of the expansion came as National Power announced that overseas profits grew to £67m in the first half of the year, helping offset flat UK profits caused by its declining market share and growing competition. Overseas earnings for the year are expected to reach at least £130m.

The company also disclosed that it had contracted to buy most of its coal requirements for next year at prices which are about 20 per cent below those it has been paying RJB Mining. The coal contracts with RJB

Mining are set at prices of around £1.45 a gigajoule compared with international prices of £1 to £1.20 a gigajoule.

National Power also said that the prospects of RJB receiving government support for a 700 megawatt clean coal station it was planning to build at Kellingley in West Yorkshire appeared slim. Studies by RJB, National Power and Texaco indicate that electricity from the station would cost 3.9p a unit compared with a pool price of 2.6p, meaning the levels of subsidy would need to be significant.

Botnar ordered to pay £68m PFI receives £500m boost

Octav Botnar, the millionaire founder of Nissan UK, was yesterday ordered by the High Court to pay £68m in tax on dividends channelled into a charitable trust set up in memory of his daughter.

Mr Botnar, who has lived as an exile in Switzerland for the past five years following a raid on Nissan UK headquarters by the Inland Revenue in 1991, said he would appeal the judgment. The ruling follows a decision by the Revenue to abandon the prosecution of 84-year-old Mr Botnar on charges of tax fraud and lift two arrest warrants.

Mr Botnar said he found the latest ruling "highly creative and the product of an inventive mind, bearing no resemblance to reality".

Mr Botnar has already paid £59m to the Revenue in settlement of all its outstanding tax claims against Nissan UK. He intends to return to Britain probably early in the new year.

The latest judgment follows a two-day hearing in the High Court last month which found Mr Botnar was personally liable for tax on the dividends paid into the trust between 1974 and 1990.

— Michael Harrison

The Government gave a much needed boost to the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) yesterday by announcing that it planned to fund £500m worth of local government construction projects in 1998/9, double the amount it has agreed to finance this year. The decision should pave the way for a huge expansion of the PFI, which is aimed at outsourcing construction projects to private contractors. Most of the £500m will be invested in schools and transport.

The Government has also introduced measures to streamline the PFI process which should speed up the award of con-

tracts. The move comes in to response to growing criticism from the private sector of the PFI which has been dogged by heavy delays and bound up in bureaucratic red tape.

Hilary Armstrong, Local Government Minister, said: "Authorities and the private sector can now use the opportunities PFI provides to remedy investment backlogs in schools, transport systems, police, fire, waste and other services."

Adrian Montague, head of the Treasury PFI Taskforce, said: "We have a lot of new projects in the pipeline. There is a huge amount of interest in the PFI."

IN BRIEF

Vickers joins Bank of England as director

John Vickers, Professor of Political Economy at Oxford University, has been appointed an executive director and chief economist of the Bank of England. Professor Vickers, an expert on privatisation and regulation, will replace Mervyn King, who becomes a deputy governor of the Bank when the Bank of England Bill passes into law next spring. The Bank has also appointed Richard Brealey, Professor of Finance at the London Business School, as an adviser to the Governor on financial stability. Meanwhile, Sir Alan Budd, former Treasury chief economic adviser, has moved to the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee. Gus O'Donnell, a former aide to John Major, has stepped into Sir Alan's shoes, although in a somewhat changed role, at the Treasury.

BCCI accountant convicted

Abul Hameed Chiragh, the 53-year-old chartered accountant at the centre of the BCCI banking fraud, was yesterday convicted of false accounting, conspiracy to defraud and perverting the course of justice following an investigation by the Serious Fraud Squad. Mr Chiragh was used by BCCI to draw up false accounts for bogus off-shore companies. Mr Chiragh was a friend of Saleem Khan, who is alleged to have received £100,000 in bribes to orchestrate a fraud involving the transfer of \$1.2bn (£710m) of funds to Abbas Gokal and his Gulf Group of multinational companies. The fraud led to the collapse of BCCI in 1991.

Confidence in Germany dips

Business confidence in western Germany dipped for the first time since April, according to the Ifo survey, falling to 99.7 from 100 in September. The equivalent index for eastern Germany showed an increase from 103.2 to 103.5 but remained below its 1997 average. The Bundesbank reported a drop in the headline growth of M3, its key monetary indicator.

Allied Colloids the share of the day as merger rumours abound

MARKET REPORT



CATHY NEWMAN

Mergers are being concocted in the specialty chemicals sector, according to rumours, with Allied Colloids the main focus of attention. Dealers could not get their hands on the company's shares quick enough yesterday. More than 14 million were traded, sending the price up 10.5p to 125p.

Frederic buying and selling has continued unabated since Tuesday night. One transaction saw 1 million change hands at 118p.

And the buyer? Laporte, which said a few months ago it had £45m to spend, appears to be the predatory name in the frame. Jim Long, chief executive, has finished restructuring the company and could be looking for other activities to occupy his time. Laporte ended down 7.5p at 629p.

The chemicals sector was not the only one to feel some

heat yesterday. Fund managers saw some action following the Merrill Lynch £3.1bn takeover of Mercury Asset Management. MAM jumped 380p to £16.75 and pushed other banking stocks higher. Schroders was up 140p to £18.15. Of the second-liners, Perpetual, up 240p to £24.75, and M&G, up 160p to £13.35, were in favour. Henderson joined in the action as well, firming 167.5p to £14.40.

There was talk of corporate action at Rentokil Initial, which ended the day 17.75p better off at 256.75p. However, the house broker said the volume of shares traded was not out of the ordinary. Just over 4 million changed hands.

Separately, investors in a Royal Bank of Scotland were in the money, with the shares adding 25.5p to 675p after

speculation that Abbey National could bid. The bank was also attracting buyers after news of the merger between First Union and Core States in the US.

Vodafone got the right number yesterday after the previous day's losses. The phone company improved 14.5p to 356p after a snowstorm of positive brokers' notes. Lehman Brothers, SBC Warburg, BZW, UBS and HSBC James Capel all issued buy recommendations.

It was a question of number, however, for another telecoms company, Iridium. The group fell from grace in a spectacular fashion yesterday, just four months after its July flotation. Iridium led the second-line fallers by a long stretch, crashing 101p to 156p after gloomy interim results and news that its network

roll-out was to be delayed, sparking a crisis of confidence in the management.

Retailers were left on the shelf yesterday after Sainsbury's profits warning. The company owned up to a downturn in sales which led to dull interim results. Brokers' downgrades followed, and the company led the Footsie fallers to close 64p poorer at 330p.



SBC Warburg, Société Générale and UBS were among those emitting negative noises yesterday.

Other remaindered food retailers were Sainsbury, down 17.5p at 476.5p, and Tesco, 16.5p poorer at 473.5p. Exporters had a tough time as the pound strengthened on the back of better-than-expected retail sales figures. Among those to feel the pain were TI Group, down 30p at 470p, and Zeeva, off 41p at £17.17.

Rio Tinto, the global mining giant, was a big Footsie casualty as market-makers took fright at the slide in base metal prices and sent the stock down 26.5p to 720p. UBS is among several brokers to have slashed forecasts. The investment house has lopped its 1998 estimates by 9 per cent. Rio is more exposed to cop-

per than its mining peers, so reports of excess supply in the copper market in the past few days have hit it hard. During the first six months of the year, copper accounted for more than one-fifth of Rio's sales.

P&O got back in early trading after news that Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, had cleared its merger with Stena Line but had attached conditions. The two cross-channel ferry companies will have to give guarantees about passenger fares. P&O was as low as 651p at one point but rallied later to close just 2p down at 667p.

Another transport company suffering from a lack of fuel was British Airways, 8p worse off at 555p, after easyJet said it was seeking legal advice about the airline's plans to offer a rival "no-frills" service.

TAKING STOCK

CanWest Global Communications, the family-controlled Canadian broadcaster, continues to raise its stake in Ulster TV, one of the last independently owned ITV companies. CanWest, which first bought into Ulster last month, snapped up another 500,000 shares yesterday, taking its holding to 8.38 per cent. Although the company insists it is not about to make a full bid, it is increasing the pressure on Scottish Media Group, which is expected to swallow Ulster.

Savoy Asset Management is hoping to ride on the back of the appetite for fund managers when it comes to the market today. The company, which specialises in fund management and stock-broking, has placed 1.5 million shares at 95p. Dealing is expected to open at 100p to 105p.

Alcoholic Beverages	Price	Change
430000 Allied Domes	520.00	+0.40
430000 Allied Domes	520.00	+0.40
430000 Allied Domes	520.00	+0.40

Banks, Merchant	Price	Change
500000 Bank of Scotland	240.00	+0.10
500000 Bank of Scotland	240.00	+0.10
500000 Bank of Scotland	240.00	+0.10

Banks, Retail	Price	Change
100000 Aldi	10.00	+0.05
100000 Aldi	10.00	+0.05
100000 Aldi	10.00	+0.05

Breweries Pubs & Rest	Price	Change
200000 Beckett	20.00	+0.10
200000 Beckett	20.00	+0.10
200000 Beckett	20.00	+0.10

Building/Construction	Price	Change
300000 B&B	30.00	+0.10
300000 B&B	30.00	+0.10
300000 B&B	30.00	+0.10

Chemicals	Price	Change
400000 Albion	40.00	+0.10
400000 Albion	40.00	+0.10
400000 Albion	40.00	+0.10

Engineering	Price	Change
500000 B&B	50.00	+0.10
500000 B&B	50.00	+0.10
500000 B&B	50.00	+0.10

Engineering Vehicles	Price	Change
600000 B&B	60.00	+0.10
600000 B&B	60.00	+0.10
600000 B&B	60.00	+0.10

Extrusive Industries	Price	Change
700000 B&B	70.00	+0.10
700000 B&B	70.00	+0.10
700000 B&B	70.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
800000 B&B	80.00	+0.10
800000 B&B	80.00	+0.10
800000 B&B	80.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
900000 B&B	90.00	+0.10
900000 B&B	90.00	+0.10
900000 B&B	90.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1000000 B&B	100.00	+0.10
1000000 B&B	100.00	+0.10
1000000 B&B	100.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1100000 B&B	110.00	+0.10
1100000 B&B	110.00	+0.10
1100000 B&B	110.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1200000 B&B	120.00	+0.10
1200000 B&B	120.00	+0.10
1200000 B&B	120.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1300000 B&B	130.00	+0.10
1300000 B&B	130.00	+0.10
1300000 B&B	130.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1400000 B&B	140.00	+0.10
1400000 B&B	140.00	+0.10
1400000 B&B	140.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1500000 B&B	150.00	+0.10
1500000 B&B	150.00	+0.10
1500000 B&B	150.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1600000 B&B	160.00	+0.10
1600000 B&B	160.00	+0.10
1600000 B&B	160.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1700000 B&B	170.00	+0.10
1700000 B&B	170.00	+0.10
1700000 B&B	170.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1800000 B&B	180.00	+0.10
1800000 B&B	180.00	+0.10
1800000 B&B	180.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
1900000 B&B	190.00	+0.10
1900000 B&B	190.00	+0.10
1900000 B&B	190.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
2000000 B&B	200.00	+0.10
2000000 B&B	200.00	+0.10
2000000 B&B	200.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
2100000 B&B	210.00	+0.10
2100000 B&B	210.00	+0.10
2100000 B&B	210.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
2200000 B&B	220.00	+0.10
2200000 B&B	220.00	+0.10
2200000 B&B	220.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
2300000 B&B	230.00	+0.10
2300000 B&B	230.00	+0.10
2300000 B&B	230.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
2400000 B&B	240.00	+0.10
2400000 B&B	240.00	+0.10
2400000 B&B	240.00	+0.10

Food Producers	Price	Change
2500000 B&B	250.00	+0.10
2500000 B&B	250.00	+0.10
2500000 B&B	250.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
300000 B&B	30.00	+0.10
300000 B&B	30.00	+0.10
300000 B&B	30.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
400000 B&B	40.00	+0.10
400000 B&B	40.00	+0.10
400000 B&B	40.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
500000 B&B	50.00	+0.10
500000 B&B	50.00	+0.10
500000 B&B	50.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
600000 B&B	60.00	+0.10
600000 B&B	60.00	+0.10
600000 B&B	60.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
700000 B&B	70.00	+0.10
700000 B&B	70.00	+0.10
700000 B&B	70.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
800000 B&B	80.00	+0.10
800000 B&B	80.00	+0.10
800000 B&B	80.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
900000 B&B	90.00	+0.10
900000 B&B	90.00	+0.10
900000 B&B	90.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1000000 B&B	100.00	+0.10
1000000 B&B	100.00	+0.10
1000000 B&B	100.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1100000 B&B	110.00	+0.10
1100000 B&B	110.00	+0.10
1100000 B&B	110.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1200000 B&B	120.00	+0.10
1200000 B&B	120.00	+0.10
1200000 B&B	120.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1300000 B&B	130.00	+0.10
1300000 B&B	130.00	+0.10
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Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1400000 B&B	140.00	+0.10
1400000 B&B	140.00	+0.10
1400000 B&B	140.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1500000 B&B	150.00	+0.10
1500000 B&B	150.00	+0.10
1500000 B&B	150.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1600000 B&B	160.00	+0.10
1600000 B&B	160.00	+0.10
1600000 B&B	160.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1700000 B&B	170.00	+0.10
1700000 B&B	170.00	+0.10
1700000 B&B	170.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1800000 B&B	180.00	+0.10
1800000 B&B	180.00	+0.10
1800000 B&B	180.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
1900000 B&B	190.00	+0.10
1900000 B&B	190.00	+0.10
1900000 B&B	190.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels	Price	Change
2000000 B&B	200.00	+0.10
2000000 B&B	200.00	+0.10
2000000 B&B	200.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
100000 B&B	100.00	+0.10
100000 B&B	100.00	+0.10
100000 B&B	100.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
200000 B&B	200.00	+0.10
200000 B&B	200.00	+0.10
200000 B&B	200.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
300000 B&B	300.00	+0.10
300000 B&B	300.00	+0.10
300000 B&B	300.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
400000 B&B	400.00	+0.10
400000 B&B	400.00	+0.10
400000 B&B	400.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
500000 B&B	500.00	+0.10
500000 B&B	500.00	+0.10
500000 B&B	500.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
600000 B&B	600.00	+0.10
600000 B&B	600.00	+0.10
600000 B&B	600.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
700000 B&B	700.00	+0.10
700000 B&B	700.00	+0.10
700000 B&B	700.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
800000 B&B	800.00	+0.10
800000 B&B	800.00	+0.10
800000 B&B	800.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
900000 B&B	900.00	+0.10
900000 B&B	900.00	+0.10
900000 B&B	900.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
1000000 B&B	1000.00	+0.10
1000000 B&B	1000.00	+0.10
1000000 B&B	1000.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
1100000 B&B	1100.00	+0.10
1100000 B&B	1100.00	+0.10
1100000 B&B	1100.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
1200000 B&B	1200.00	+0.10
1200000 B&B	1200.00	+0.10
1200000 B&B	1200.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
1300000 B&B	1300.00	+0.10
1300000 B&B	1300.00	+0.10
1300000 B&B	1300.00	+0.10

Share Price Data	Price	Change
1400000 B&B	1400.00	+0.10

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Safeway takes its eye off the ball

It has been a telling few weeks in the supermarket sector. The attempted £9bn merger between Asda and Safeway always seemed to indicate that the two companies needed more scale to fight the battle against Tesco and Sainsbury's and now we know which company needed that deal most.

Yesterday's profits warning from Safeway was a belter by any standards. Non-existent sales growth and a warning on full-year profits came on top of flat half-year profits and an interim dividend held for the first time since 1992. It is obvious who has lost out most to the resurgent Sainsbury's.

And we have a return to the normal received wisdom that not all of the big four supermarket operators can succeed at the same time.

Safeway's predicament is all the more surprising given the progress the group made with its Safeway 2000 initiative which set about restructuring the cost base and attracting family shoppers.

What appears to have happened is that while Safeway was achieving great marketing successes with its Harry and Molly advertising and whizzy in-store technology, it was taking its eyes off some of the nuts and bolts of retailing such as stock availability and the supply chain.

Meanwhile, the wooing of high-spending family shoppers seems to have deterred secondary customers.

The proposed three-point, three-year recovery plan is not all it appears either. The aim to increase sales by £1bn in the next three years works out at just 4 per cent a year, which rivals are achieving anyway; the £60m cost savings are not significantly more than previously announced and, of the £600m promised to shareholders over three years, £400m of that will be the normal dividend anyway.

That leaves shareholders panting for a paltry 10p per share which probably won't arrive until the third year.

With an Asda deal virtually ruled out on competition grounds and no obvious overseas bidder, it could be a long haul.

On full-year forecasts of around £400m, the shares, down 64p to 330p

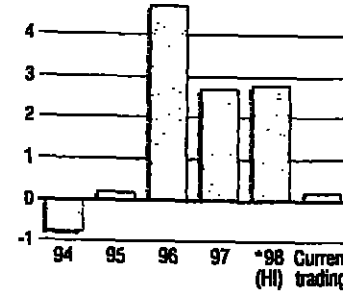
Safeway: At a glance

Market value: £3.6bn, share price 330p (-64p)

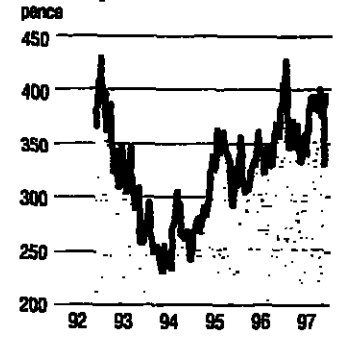
Trading record	1995	1996	1997	1996/7	1997/8
Turnover (£bn)	5.81	6.01	6.59	3.74	3.97
Pre-tax profits (£m)	175.6	423.4	420.6	228.2	228.6
Earnings per share (p)	8.3	26.4	26.8	14.4	14.9
Dividends per share (p)	12.0	12.75	14.1	4.4	4.3

Like for like sales growth

(ie excluding new space) %



Share price



yesterday, traded on a forward multiple of 13.

That is a deserved 26 per cent discount to the market and the shares look no more than a hold.

Land Securities looks good value

Property companies are enjoying the good times again after a prolonged recession which saw property shares tumble in the first half of the 1990s. Relatively low interest rates coupled with the strong economy have seen rents grow rapidly and stimulated a sharp rise in property values.

Land Securities, which dominates the property sector, representing one-quarter of its total value, has been the major beneficiary of the industry upturn. Its shares have risen by 37 per cent since the start of the year.

After this storming performance it is tempting to take profits. The shares certainly do not look cheap. Analysts forecast Land Securities' current net asset value at 856p a share. That means the group is trading on a 14 pre-

mium to net assets compared to a sector average premium of 10 per cent. Indeed historically property shares have traded at a discount to net asset values, reflecting the cyclical nature of the business, which suggests the whole sector looks rather pricey.

Despite these concerns, the property industry and Land Securities looks set fair for the next few years. Strong demand should see rents continue to rise. Traditionally the yield you get from investing in property is less than that you would get from gilts. At the moment the reverse is true. This suggests that property yields will fall, or in other words, property values should rise.

Land Securities is less highly geared than many of its rivals so it may not benefit as much from rising property values. But the virtue of the group's cautious policy is it should continue to produce steady growth. A shift into the buoyant retail sector and a new £450m investment programme will also stand it in good stead.

Land Securities shares slipped 10p to 970p as it announced a fall in pre-tax profits to £191m (£202m) for the six months to September due to a loss on property disposals.

However investors should concen-

trate on its net asset growth. UBS forecasts net assets should rise to 905p by next March and 1075p the year after. Good value.

Courtaulds counts on Tencel

So it doesn't wrinkle, it's tough and it's as soft as silk. But can Courtaulds' "wonder-fibre", Tencel, revitalise the chemical group's flagging fortunes? Courtaulds shares have slumped to 270p, less than 50 per cent of their value five years ago, and 7.5p down on the day on the back of poor first-half results. Pre-tax profits in the six months to September were £62m, 5 per cent down on last year.

Tencel, touted as "the Lycra for the millennium", is unlikely to prove as lucrative as Courtaulds once hoped. First, the wonder-fibre is used in jeans - M&S is among the notable Tencel converts - and demand in the denim market is relatively weak. Second, Courtaulds, once the sole Tencel supplier, is now beginning to face competition. Nevertheless, prospects for Tencel are still good. Courtaulds reckons that Tencel will account for 20 per cent of all turnover within five years. Currently, it accounts for about 3 per cent of sales.

Even if Tencel fulfils all expectations, it is unlikely to be sufficient to transform Courtaulds into a high-growth organisation. The company needs to look elsewhere if it is to turn things around. Prospects at its coatings & sealants division, which account for about half of turnover, look good. Courtaulds has an entrenched position in market niches, such as aircraft coatings. Polymer products, which saw a moderate rise in profits this half, also look strong.

The real problem is that around one-fifth of revenues still come from viscose and acrylic. Not only are these mature markets, but competition, particularly in viscose, is vigorous. What is more, raw material prices for viscose and acrylic are notoriously volatile.

Forecasts from ABN Amro put Courtaulds on a forward p/e of about 12. The large discount to the market looks justified. Hold.

Newcastle Utd scraps super stadium plans

Newcastle United's goal to build a football super stadium to rival any in the world has been dashed. Andrew Yates finds that local opposition to the new site looks to have scuppered the club's plans.

Newcastle United is set to abandon plans to build a \$5,000-seat stadium. It admitted yesterday it had submitted alternative plans to Newcastle City Council to upgrade and extend St James' Park, its existing ground.

Newcastle had hoped to spend £90m on constructing a stadium at Castle Leazes Moor and converting St James' Park into a huge leisure complex including an indoor arena and running track. However it failed to count on huge local opposi-

tion to the scheme which would have meant the loss of acres of parkland in the heart of the city. Several pressure groups, which included Friends of the Earth, and local campaigners such as No Business on the Moor and Friends of Leazes Park, collected a petition of 18,000 signatures opposing the scheme. Faced with the prospect of a lengthy public inquiry, Newcastle was forced to reconsider its plans.

The news met with a mixed reaction in the financial community. Newcastle's shares have performed poorly since it floated at 135p last April, falling to 99.5p. Some analysts said the alternative plans removed fears that Newcastle would struggle to fund the stadium which would not have started producing extra revenues until the turn of the century.

Vinay Bedi, a football analyst with brokers Wise Speke,

said yesterday: "This removes one big question mark hanging over the shares. The move should be treated with optimism."

However another analyst said: "There has been one U-turn after another since the flotation including the resignation of Mark Corbridge [former joint chief executive]. It hardly inspires faith in the club's future and management."

Sir John Hall, the club's former chairman and main financial backer, dreamed of creating a stadium that would be the envy of the football world. Dubbed the "San Siro of the North", the three-tier, bowl-shaped stadium would have initially held 55,000 supporters and mirrored the San Siro stadium in Milan.

Newcastle now proposes to increase the capacity at St James' from just over 37,000 to more than 50,000.

Hyder goes into the red

Hyder, the Welsh electricity, water and gas supplier, yesterday showed the financial pain of Labour's windfall tax. A £280m tax hit took the company £190m into the red in the six months to September. The result compared with a profit of £90m last year.

Group profits before the tax hit rose from £100.7m to £105.7m. Core utilities performed strongly, said Paul Twamley, Hyder's finance director. Particularly successful was the move into gas supply.

Hyder supplies 270,000 people with gas and is adding 2,500 gas customers a month. The company, formed by the merger of Welsh Water and Swalec, the Welsh electricity company, started supplying gas four months ago.

Marchpole chief executive set to net £11m from float

The chief executive of Marchpole Holdings will net £11m when the designer and distributor of Yves Saint Laurent menswear comes to the stock market next month. Michael Morris, 52, joined the group in 1985 when it was awarded its first licence for mens formalwear in the UK and Ireland. He has a 60 per cent stake in the business which will fall to 38 per cent post-flotation. He has spent 25 years in the menswear industry.

The shares are expected to be priced at around 120p-150p, valuing the company at £140m-£165m.

Marchpole specialises in the design, sourcing and distribution of menswear and boyswear under licence from YSL. The company has recently agreed a licence for YSL's casualwear in the

Japanese market. It said all its YSL licences were renewed at the beginning of 1997 for a 10-year period.

Marchpole recorded pre-tax profits of £2.2m in the year to 31 December 1996 on sales of £36.9m. The directors said yesterday that they estimate this year's profits to be not less than £11.1m.

The directors said the flotation would enhance the group's status and assist its UK and international growth strategy. In addition they said it would give it greater financial flexibility by raising £99m to redeem preference share capital and loan stock.

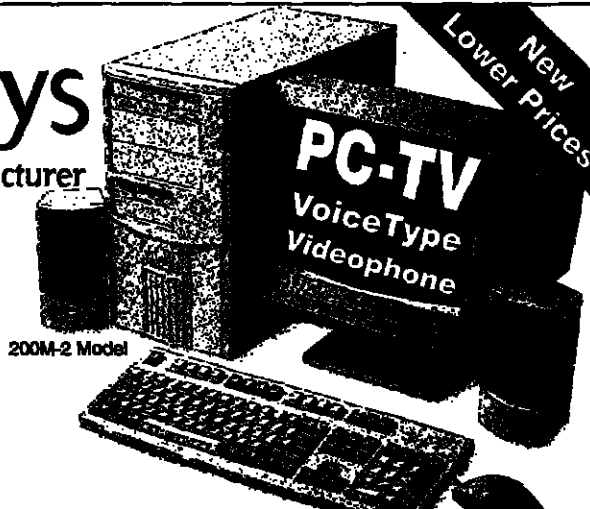
Mr Morris said: "A stock market listing will provide Marchpole with a springboard for the next phase of its growth."

- Nigel Cope

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- All standard features below

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- PC-TV system with Teletext and video capture
- 56K Rockwell voice modem
- 4Mb ATI Rage II+ DVD 3D graphics
- 24 speed MAX LG CD-ROM drive
- Creative Labs 3D wavetable sound
- 14" SVGA 0.28dp screen (15" £70)
- +VAT = £82.25 extra; 17" £220
- +VAT = £258.50 extra
- 512K pipeline burst cache
- Videophone receive for incoming videophone calls
- Voice recognition with IBM Simply Speaking GOLD
- MJN ATX system with Intel 430TX PC97 chipset
- All standard features below

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- Intel Pentium II 266MHz Processor with MMX Technology
- 64Mb SDRAM
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- PC-TV system with Teletext and video capture
- 56K Rockwell voice modem
- 8Mb ASP ATI Rage Pro 3D graphics
- 24 speed MAX LG CD-ROM drive
- Creative Labs 3D wavetable sound
- 14" SVGA 0.28dp screen (15" £70)
- +VAT = £82.25 extra; 17" £220
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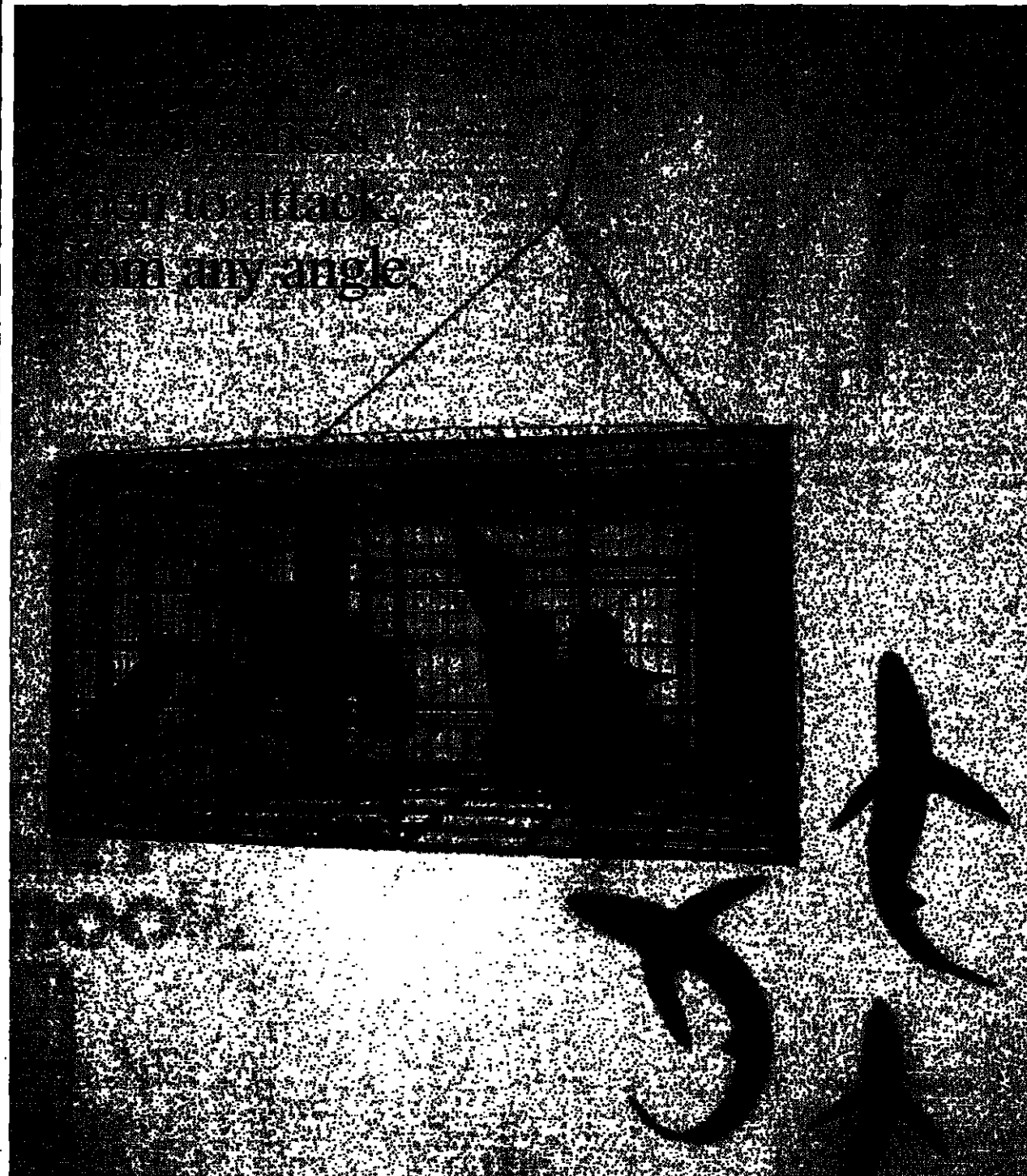
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What is happiness? An economist thinks he may have the answer



DIANE COYLE
ON WHY THE
ITALIANS ARE
MERRIER THAN
THE IRISH

"Happiness is the sublime moment when you get out of your car at night," according to the actress Joyce Grenfell. It only goes to prove that happiness is something very personal and subjective, whose analysis has always been left to poets and philosophers. Nothing to do with economists.

Or is it? In some recent research an economist has investigated whether any economic numbers influence our happiness or sense of well-being, and found answers that ought to be of huge interest to the European leaders meeting in Luxembourg today for the Jobs Summit. For unemployment, as you might expect, makes a big contribution to unhappiness.

Cynics might argue that it is typical of an economist to churn through an enormous amount of computer calculations to prove something that any fool could have told you. However, the research, by Professor Andrew Oswald at Warwick University and others, also sheds fascinating light on how unemployment compares to other economic variables in terms of unhappiness, and therefore how much emphasis governments should be putting on economic goals which are often in conflict. Eco-

nomic policy is all about making trade-offs and taking painful choices. It is no good knowing that unemployment is a bad thing if you do not know what measures people might or might not accept in order to reduce it.

Professor Oswald points out that economics is a minority interest precisely because nobody believes the budget deficit or the growth in construction orders or whatever is one of the ultimate goals of government. He says: "The stolid greyness of the business pages of our newspapers seems to mirror the fact that economic numbers matter only indirectly."

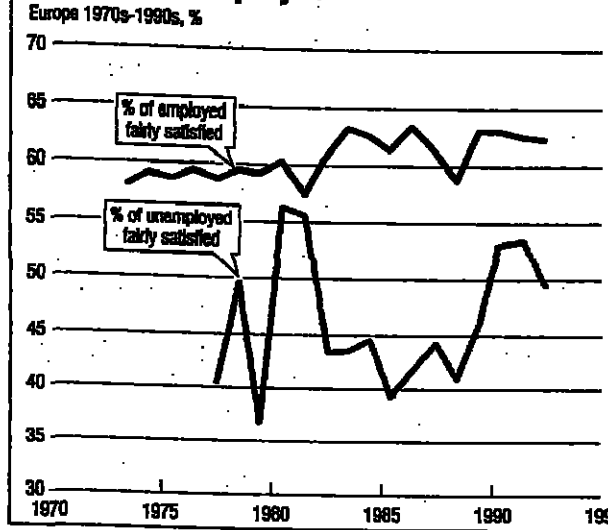
For those persistent enough to have ploughed this far through the greyness, the professor and his co-authors establish from opinion surveys in the US and Europe that well-being has increased modestly in the US but has not risen uniformly in Europe.

While the Italians have grown happier, Britons have become slightly less content, and the Irish and Belgians much less happy, over the past couple of decades. Well-being has not moved uniformly upwards despite the fact that in all of these countries average income per head has increased.

The economists establish formally that extra GDP - at least in these high-income countries - does not make any more than a slight contribution to happiness. In other words, the measure that all politicians make the totem of their success in economic policy, the growth of GDP, is neither here nor there as far as the well-being of the voters goes.

This result will not come as a surprise to those who have long argued that GDP is not an appropriate indicator or target of economic policy. The New Economics Foundation's alternative index of "sustainable economic welfare" explicitly takes account of negatives such as pollution, depletion of resources and spending on crime.

Life-satisfaction levels of the Employed and the Unemployed



It is lower now than in 1979. The new research goes on to explore what does account for changes in happiness levels if it is not the growth of the economy.

Personal characteristics naturally play a big part. Being well-educated, female, married, young or old but not middle-aged and having few children all contribute to a higher level of happiness.

Having a higher level of income makes a small contribution. But the most important factor by far is having a job. In particular, unemployed people are very unhappy.

Professor Oswald cites a wide range of other research showing the prevalence of suicide among the unemployed. Although the death rate from suicide has declined over time, those without work are 12 times more likely than the employed to attempt it, according to one study.

As well as this qualitative evidence, it is possible to put a measurement on the unhappiness caused by unemployment. In most countries, becoming unemployed has an impact on individuals' well-being equivalent to dropping from the top

to the bottom quarter of the income distribution. The conclusion: "Unemployment is a major economic source of human distress."

Well, few people would quarrel with this, and especially not the European leaders strutting their stuff for the cameras in Luxembourg today and tomorrow.

But does it mean that governments should do anything it takes to cut the jobless rate? In particular, should they forget about the current policy orthodoxy and just expand government spending or cut interest rates enough to boost the economy and consequently the number of people with jobs, whatever the consequences?

Many influential voices argue that they should, such as Robert Reich, the former US Labor Secretary. On a recent visit to London he urged central bankers to loosen up on interest rates and let the economy expand at a faster rate, and was particularly critical of the Bundesbank for raising the cost of borrowing at a time when unemployment is at record highs.

The new research indicates, however, that inflation also

makes people unhappy, and they are willing to endure a severe recession in order to reduce inflation. The survey evidence since 1975 suggests that, on average, a nine percentage point higher unemployment rate was acceptable in order to lop 10 per cent off inflation and the importance of unemployment and inflation for average happiness is therefore roughly equal.

This is not the same as saying that the happiness cost of unemployment is the same as that of inflation, for the full social cost would include the total individual misery caused by unemployment, which is large. However, the fact remains that lower inflation, other things being equal, means higher well-being. And, in political calculations about the median voter, it ought to have equal weight with unemployment.

The bad news for the politicians at the Jobs Summit is therefore that the one easy solution some economists offer to Europe's unemployment problem is not a viable option. They would have to be very confident that expanding demand would not lead to higher inflation to see it as the answer.

At the same time, if continental political leaders really care about the well-being of their citizens, they will have to accept that the low unemployment Anglo-Saxon economies hold some lessons for them.

It is jobs, and not an abstract concept of social solidarity, that make a big difference to happiness. To deny this boils down to arrogance. They might as well tell their unlucky unemployed to get on their bikes and move to a country that is creating jobs.

"Happiness and Economic Performance", Andrew Oswald; and "The Macroeconomics of Happiness", Rafael Di Tella, Robert McCulloch and Andrew Oswald. Both working papers from the Centre for Economic Performance, LSE.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



Peter Baillie, BZW's head of corporate communications for the past five years, has left the investment bank to take up the same role at GKN, the engineering group that owns Westland Helicopters. Far from being a victim of last week's acquisition of BZW's equities and corporate finance activities by Credit Suisse First Boston, Mr Baillie is leaving with the bank's blessing, I'm told.

"I've been talking with GKN for a few months," says Mr Baillie. "I spent most of my career in manufacturing and it will be good to get back to it."

The affable Scot has gardening leave until January, when he swaps BZW's Canary Wharf glass towers for GKN's swank offices in St James's, central London.

Bob Diamond, the New Yorker who now heads up the business left at Barclays, renamed Barclays Capital, has decided not to replace the irreplaceable Mr Baillie.

GKN will be familiar stuff for Mr Baillie, who has decades of defence and automotive experience. When he was spokesman at Plessey's, he was the only member of the corporate staff to be kept on by Lord Weinstock when GEC swooped. Before that, he spent 10 years at Austin Rover.

'Tis the season to write about shopping surveys. Neil Mason, an analyst with Mintel, the retail research company, says the British public spends £1.6bn on food and £345m on decorations during the festive period. If anything, we're becoming more obsessed by spending at Christmas. Nearly one-third of retail sales and more than one-quarter of total consumer expenditure is made in the fourth quarter, a share which is rising, says Mr Mason.

So what should you be flogging this year? Mr Mason has found that sales of chocolate confectionery have gone up by 16.3 per cent in 1995-6. Other winners include mince pies, up 10.3 per cent, biscuit assortments, up 10.2 per cent, and "snack nuts" (what other kind

are there?), up 14.5 per cent. Mincecarn sales off all corners, up a mighty 18.2 per cent. The only party poopers in Mr Mason's Christmas stocking are whole turkeys, whose sales fell 8.9 per cent over the same period.

Against a background of financial crisis in the Far East, Nomura International has made what it calls a "landmark appointment" by promoting a non-Japanese, a former American Marine called Max C Chapman, to become chairman and chief executive. Mr Chapman, 54, will operate in London where Nomura International, the global subsidiary of Tokyo-based Nomura Securities, has its base. Mr Chapman succeeds Takashi Tsutsumi, who has spent the past four years in the post.

Mr Chapman was president and chief operating officer of Kidder, Peabody, the Wall Street firm, until he joined Nomura International in 1989. His specific brief today is to beef up Nomura's European business.

Meanwhile Sir Douglas Wass, former Treasury mandarin and ex-chairman of Axa Equity & Law, will retire as non-executive chairman of Nomura next May at the age of 75 after 11 years at the helm.

Antony Snow, chairman of Hill & Knowlton, addressed a galaxy of the great and the good on Tuesday at the PR firm's 70th birthday party at Apsley House, the first Duke of Wellington's mansion on Hyde Park Corner.

Amazingly for a spin doctor, Mr Snow cracked a reasonably funny joke. (Only joking, chaps.) He told the assembled tycoons, editors and grand panjandrum that when he left Oxford he wrote to his father, thanking the latter for his generosity in supporting Snow junior over the years. Mr Snow also told his father that he was to become an advertising agent.

"He replied that he was pleased to have been of what assistance he could, but questioned whether advertising was really the highest to which I could aspire for so much investment," Mr Snow told the audience.

Some 25 years later Mr Snow told his dad that he had swapped advertising for PR. "I received an ecstatic acknowledgement, saying he had always had the greatest confidence that I would progress from advertising and he was particularly delighted because he had long believed that there was much to be said for proportional representation."

Martin Sorrell, head of WPP, the advertising and marketing group, was breakfasting at the Connaught with a colleague of mine this week when he espied an Armani raincoat hanging over the back of a neighbouring chair. Mr Sorrell summoned a waiter and had a heated conversation about the ownership of the coat. The WPP chief's cry was that this was somebody else's raincoat - so where was his Armani raincoat? Finally the advertising grandee gave up and left with the disputed raincoat. So who has got the real one, and is there anything interesting in the pockets?

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	Spot	1 month	3 month	Dollar	Spot	1 month	3 month	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	10000	24488	24488	24488	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Australia	24000	24488	24488	24488	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Belgium	60391	24488	24488	24488	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Denmark	1147	1121	11043	10937	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
ECU	16786	16786	16786	16786	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
France	6603	6778	6778	6778	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Germany	23928	23928	23928	23928	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Greece	49524	49524	49524	49524	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Hong Kong	13071	13071	13071	13071	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
India	12948	12948	12948	12948	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Italy	20823	20823	20823	20823	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Japan	21475	21475	21475	21475	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Malaysia	58520	58520	58520	58520	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Netherlands	32938	32938	32938	32938	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
New Zealand	27225	27225	27225	27225	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Norway	71699	71699	71699	71699	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Portugal	20833	20833	20833	20833	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
South Africa	63404	63404	63404	63404	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Spain	27225	27225	27225	27225	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Sweden	27225	27225	27225	27225	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
Switzerland	23734	23734	23734	23734	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
USA	18908	18908	18908	18908	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16906	10000	Iran	60508	10000
Brazil	16721	10000	Israel	44000	10000
Canada	643	82800	Philippines	58888	34700
Czech Rep	55450	32800	Poland	5919	34870
Egypt	57225	33800	Romania	6864	34640
France	57225	33800	Slovakia	6864	34640
Hungary	33192	16930	South Korea	17368	102800
India	63142	37280	Taiwan	53929	31900
Indonesia	58228	30035	Thailand	53929	31900
Kenya	10351	10305	Turkey	32574	10000
Nigeria	13220	76200	Ukraine	62083	36725

Interest Rates

Country	3 month	6 month	1 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year
UK	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
USA	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Germany	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
France	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Italy	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Spain	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Sweden	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Switzerland	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Japan	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Belgium	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Canada	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Australia	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
South Africa	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
India	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
China	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
South Korea	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Japan	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
USA	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%

Bond Yields

Country	3 month	6 month	1 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year
UK	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
USA	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Germany	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
France	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Italy	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Spain	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Sweden	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Switzerland	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Japan	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Belgium	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Canada	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Australia	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
South Africa	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
India	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
China	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
South Korea	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Japan	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
USA	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%

Money Market Rates

Country	Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
UK	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
USA	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Germany	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
France	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Italy	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Spain	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Sweden	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Switzerland	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Japan	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Belgium	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Canada	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Australia	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
South Africa	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
India	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
China	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
South Korea	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Japan	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
USA	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Set floor	Open
Long GB	Dec-97	1836	1834	1836	1836
Short GB	Dec-97	1834	1836	1834	1834
Long US	Dec-97	1836	1834	1836	1

Monty returns to scene of past misery

Six years ago, Kiawah Island staged a dramatic and controversial Ryder Cup. This week the fearsome Ocean Course needs to be tamed again in the World Cup, golf's gentler team event, from which Fred Couples has had to withdraw. Andy Farrell reports from South Carolina.

Not everyone was overwhelmed when it was announced that the 43rd World Cup of Golf was to be played on the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island. Bernhard Langer, for one, decided to leave the German challenge in the capable, if less renowned, hands of Alex Cejka and Sven Struer.

Langer has been a great supporter of the two-man nations competition, winning the individual trophy in 1993. But returning to the site of his missed six-footer, on the last green of the last match, with which America regained the Ryder Cup six years ago was too much to ask.

Four members of that European team - England's Paul Broadhurst and Mark James, Ian Woosnam, of Wales, and the Scot Colin Montgomerie - are here hoping to take home better memories than those from what was dubbed the "War on the Shore".

Fred Couples was due to appear alongside Davis Love. The pair won the World Cup four years in a row from 1992, but Couples has remained in Seattle to comfort his father in his fight against leukaemia.

He has been replaced by the Open champion, Justin Leonard, who like Love and Ernie Els arrived yesterday after playing in the 36-hole Grand Slam event for the four major winners in Hawaii. The threesome flew across half of the Pacific, the whole of America and five time-zones to tee up in the pro-am.

It was worth their while. Els, who defends the World Cup title he and Wayne Westner won for South Africa in Cape Town last year, picked up \$400,000 (£245,000) after beating Tiger Woods by three with a second-round 65. Leonard earned \$150,000 for finishing fourth.

Montgomerie started the unofficial, or "silly", season well by winning the King Hassan Trophy in Morocco using a new set of irons. In his singles match in the '91 Ryder Cup he scored an approximate 81, but halved with Mark Calcavecchia. Five down at the turn, the Scot won the last four holes with scores of six, five, five, four. He blamed the new, hard course with its ultra-fast greens. "It is softer now so the fairways will play wider," he said.

Though Montgomerie, after some agonising, decided to remain based on the European tour, where he has won the money list five times in a row, he will take up his maximum allocation of 12 events in America next year.

"The main point was whether I felt I could win a major playing in Europe," Monty said. "I know I can. It is about getting my schedule right, not playing in Europe the week before a major in America, that sort of thing. I am fortunate that I have the option to do a bit of both. I am comfortable in Europe because I have been successful. Why change a successful pattern?"

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TENNIS

Hingis starts with a win on the court and off it

The end of season finale of the Women's Tennis Association had looked like being no more than a moderate work-out for the world No 1, Martina Hingis. But her first appearance on court held some surprises. Bob Greene reports from New York.

Martina Hingis won a difficult opening-round match at the women's season-ending Chase Championships at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday night when Brenda Schultz-McCarthy retired injured.

Hingis was leading 7-6, 5-2 when Schultz-McCarthy withdrew because of pain from a broken right toenail. Earlier, the sixth-seeded Ivana Majoli had won her first-round match, edging out Anke Huber 7-6, 7-6.

In the night's final match, Jana Novotna, the No 2 seed, defeated Conchita Martinez 6-4, 6-4.

Hingis kept her award-winning streak going on Tuesday when she was named the Corel WTA Tour's Player of the Year. She was named Most Impressive Newcomer in 1995 and Most Improved Player in 1996.

This year, she has won 12 tournaments going into the season-ending Chase Championships, and been victorious at three of the four Grand Slam tournaments. She has been ranked No 1 since March.

The final score was not indicative of the battle Schultz-McCarthy gave Hingis on the Madison Square Garden carpet.

pet. Until she was injured, the 21st Dutch woman with the biggest serve in women's tennis pounded Hingis with her huge strokes, holding her own against a player who has lost only four times this year.

On the penultimate point in the second game of the second set, Schultz-McCarthy raced to the net. But, as she tried to change direction, she appeared to stub her toe and lost the point.

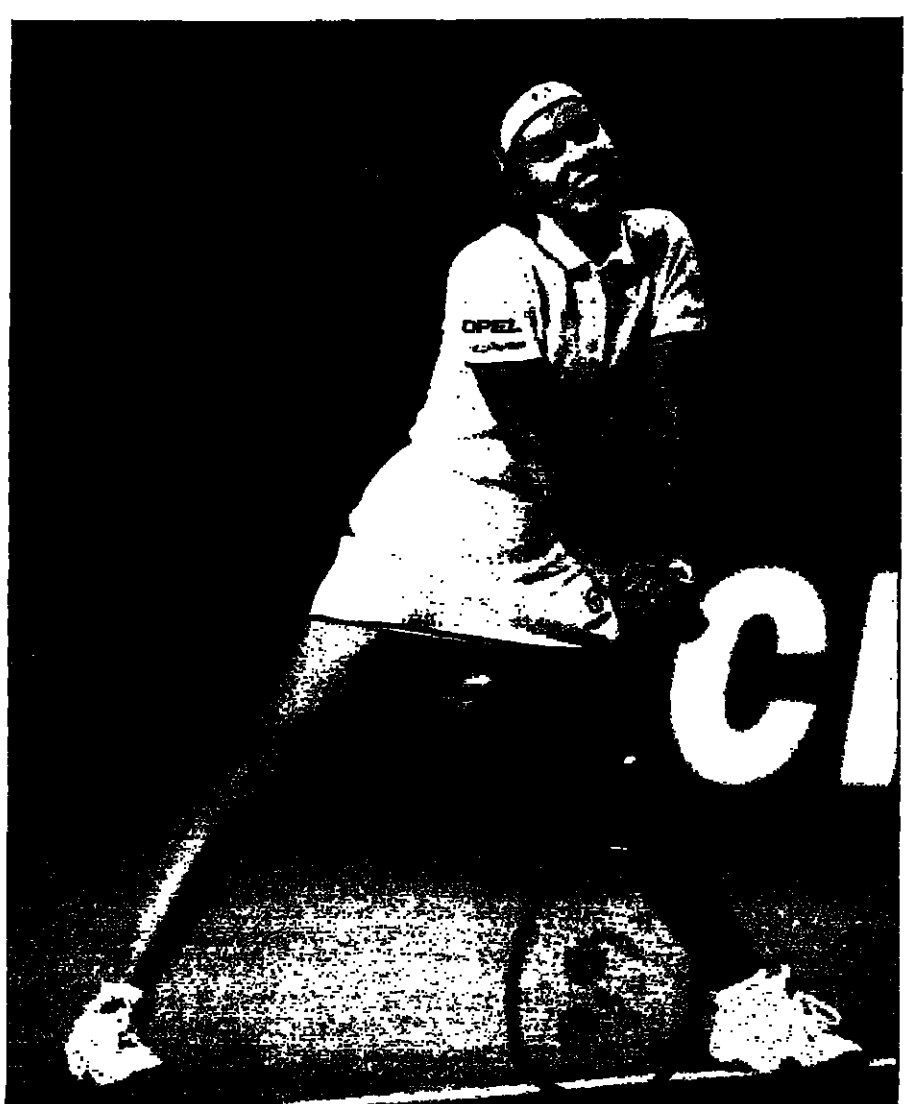
Hingis won the next point to level at 1-1. Then, instead of serving, Schultz-McCarthy went to the umpire to say

Malool and asked for an injury time-out. She had ripped off a portion of the big toenail on her right foot.

"I went to volleyball and I had to reach," Schultz-McCarthy said. "My toe just totally went. My nail went off my toe completely."

After having the toe attended to, Schultz-McCarthy returned to the court and held her service to 15 for a 2-1 lead. It was the last game she would win.

In the fourth game, the only point Schultz-McCarthy won was via a Hingis double-



Martina Hingis was not outstretched in her first match Photograph: Osama Honda

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faulted. By then, the world's top-ranked player was in control as her Dutch opponent was apparently bothered by her foot. After she lost her next two service games, Schultz-McCarthy retired from the match.

The national champion, Sam Smith, will lead the British team in the First Division of the European Women's Team Championship at Redbridge Sports Centre, Essex, later this month. The former Wimbledon champion Ann Jones will be the non-playing captain of the British team.

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Atapattu overcomes jinx

Sri Lanka 280-4 v India

Sri Lanka's Marvan Atapattu hit his maiden Test century to overcome his Indian jinx and put his side in charge of the first Test in Mohali yesterday.

The stylish right-hander, who failed to make a run in four Test innings in India in 1993, hit 108 to carry the tourists to 280 for 4 by close of the opening day's play.

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